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POLKA IN THE TEA ROOM WITH; MIKE D
RUSSELL SIMINS, SPIKE JONZE AND YOKO ONO

THREE IS THE MAGIC NUMBER
THE ADIDAS STORY

SWITCHED-ON MOOG

A 32-PAGE HISTORY OF EVERYTHING
ANALOG; WITH: BOB MOOG, DICK
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SEAR, STEREO LAB, KEYBOARD MONEY
MARK AND A CAVALCADE OF STARS



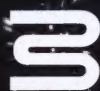
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GRAND ROYAL

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COVER: Brush stroking by Brad Spence. Scientific applications and digital detailing by Geoff McFetridge.

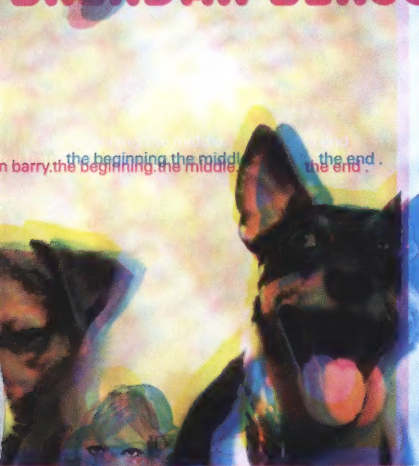
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and
"Seeing Gun"

Pluto

featuring
"Paste"
and
"When She Was Happy"

Sneaker Pimps

debut EP out this fall
debut album early '97

Sex Pistols

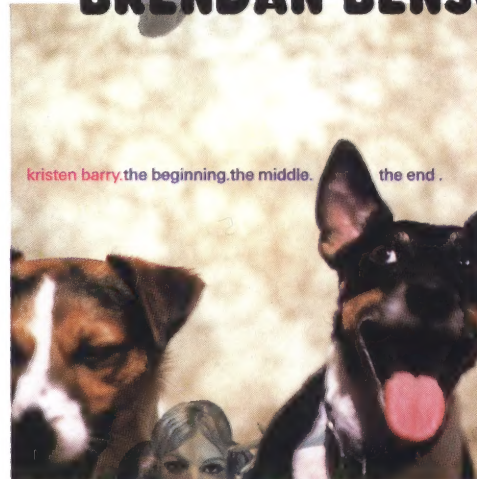
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documenting their '96 tour

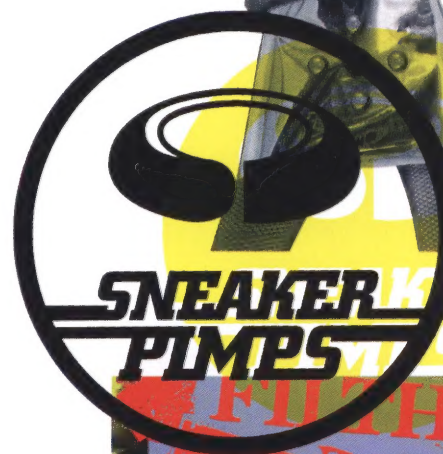
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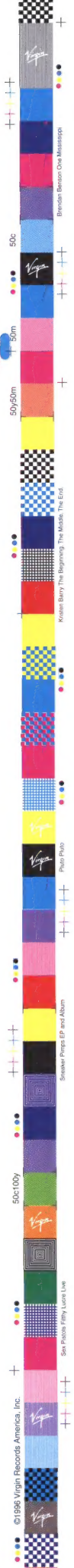
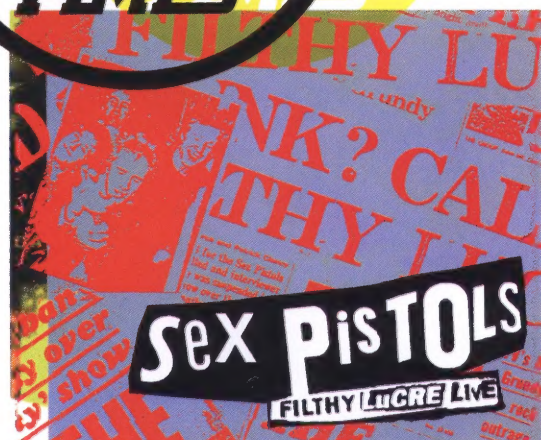
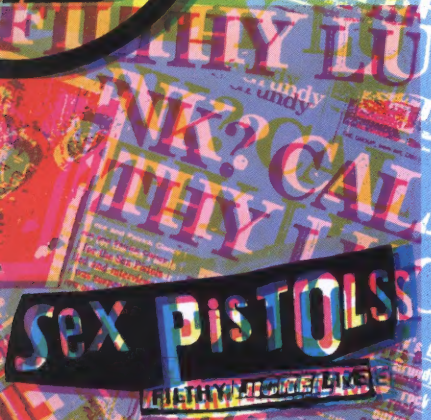




photo: Danny Hole

class of '95: Pete Relic, Bob Mack and Steve Knezevich

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Three years, two issues, hundreds of headaches, heartaches, disses, disappointments and missed appointments later, one of the geniuses of our time finally blew a fuse: As *Grand Royal* #2 hit the racks, editor Bob Mack did not wait around for the tickertapeworm parade. Instead, he threw a filing cabinet off a fire escape and exited-stage-left on a long-term, cantaloupe-picking hiatus—much to the sweet relief and sad dismay of our publishers, Mistrs Diamond, Yauch and Horovitz. A week or two later I was FedExed a carrier pigeon, to see if I had any interest in being in the new *Grand Royal* whatevitor. My mission: to assist them in a quest for the threeppeat.

Eleven months after accepting Mike D's offer, I'm pretty sure I know what drove Bob Mack nuts—the contradictory, never ending battle of having too much shit crammed into too few pages, versus the general consensus that magazines suck, and for various reasons, nobody takes the time to read them anyway. Danger: It could require you to invest days—maybe even weeks—scrutinizing and processing everything from this page on. That's the point, the punch line, and the way it is. In the back of your head, place the following information: *Grand Royal* doesn't come overflowing with perfume samples or bind-in subscription cards, and is printed on recycled paper with the environmentally nice ink. We also care about the ideas, people, and articles we've put together here, and worked like crazy to get it as dope as we could. Some find it a source of amusement, inspiration, and/or frustration that we are not in the practice of using trained, housebroken, professionally slick writers. And WE definitely don't know what we're doing sometimes. As proud as we are of this issue, unfortunately there is a lack of female-written and female-oriented pieces, among the numerous other things, that did not come to fruition. There really is no excuse for this, all we can say is we have issue #4 to look forward to, which will hopefully be sooner than later. As always, you are encouraged to help make this publication better with your contributions/dialogue/feedback, or start one yourself, or do something positive with your life. Thanks for supporting us, and we'll see you next time.

Your very good buddy,
mark lewman

* Bob Mack was later acquitted on all charges of delay of game, pot-holding and jocking. *GR*#2 stands as a beacon of truth and madness, and is still available for \$4.00, post-paid.



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**a perpetrator's guide to
hollywood hotel swimming
pools by spike jonze**

I think it's very moral to swim in hotel pools when you're not technically staying there. It's a public swimming facility, and as long as you don't drip in the wrong place, you're okay.

Through trial and error, I've come to the conclusion that it's a bad idea to front yourself as a guest if you get caught—that's when you get into *travd*. Saying you're an employee is even harder to pull off. The best way to handle these touchy situations is to tell the Authority Figure *we're not staying here, but we're just swimming*. Basically it's going to happen if you swim habitually, so if you get busted, leave. The tip off to security/management that you and your party are not really guests: people swimming in their boxers, a large pile of clothes, shoes and socks next to a deck chair. While it is possible to bring a small posse (five people) on one of these adventures, I personally think three is the perfect number. This is also a great activity if you're on a date. See you in the deep end.—Spike

A vertical sequence of four images showing a person jumping into a swimming pool. The sequence starts with the person standing on the pool deck, then jumping, then falling into the water, and finally creating a large splash.



Hollywood Roosevelt

7000 Hollywood Blvd.

POOL FEATURES: Olympic size, and the bottom was painted by David Hockney—one of three pools he painted in his career. This is a really good pool, 'cause it's totally separate from the hotel, plus there's a Jacuzzi and a fitness room.

PARKING: Park the car across the street from the high school, or use the nearby \$2 lot. Avoid valet—you've seen **Ferris Bueller's Day Off**.

SECURITY: Low risk.

TOWELS: There's usually a huge stack of fresh towels set out for guests. Help yourself.

COMMENTS: Plenty of Europeans stay at the Roosevelt: banana hammock alert. Also sighted taking dips: Robin Hitchcock; Moby; the band Filter. A lot of rap groups stay here as well.

Holiday Inn

At Colorado and Santa Monica

POOL FEATURES: The best west side pool. You can jump off the wall that separates the pool from Colorado Blvd. It's a 25 foot drop into the water. Usually I swim here in my boxers. All these people think you're up to something funny, and can see your wet ass clinging to your boxers as you stand atop the wall.

PARKING: The parking is very loose. The best thing to do is drive down to the parking on the 2nd level and it spills you out right into the pool. Avoid going through the hotel. Tell the valet guy you're going to park it yourself.

SECURITY: Totally slack.

TOWELS: No towels.

COMMENTS: During Hurricane's "Stick 'Em Up" video we filmed here, and Tamra

didn't want Adam Horovitz to do the jump. I put a second set of clothes on to make me look like him. At the last minute, Adam just said, "Ahh, fuck it. I wanna do it." Tamra was expecting me to do it. She had no idea until he popped over the wall and plunged in. Adam does his own stunts. I respect that.

Wyndam Belage

1020 San Vicente Blvd.

POOL FEATURES: Rooftop with panoramic views of the LA basin. The highlights of this one are going late at night, on a hot summer night, and doing the Jacuzzi with a view.

PARKING: Valet parking is really expensive here, try to park on the street if you can (and remember to curb your tires or you get a ticket). If you drive in on the opposite side of the parking lot, you can skip the valet parking and go directly into the parking garage. Park way in the back.

SECURITY: A new development with the Belage, you can't take the elevator to the pool without a key. You either have to take the stairs or the service elevator, and that's pretty much good 24 hours a day.

TOWELS: No.

COMMENTS: We got busted here once trying to bill things to somebody's room.

Holiday Inn

1755 Highland Ave.

POOL FEATURES: The pool's really small and actually a little gross, but it does the job.

PARKING: Park on the street.

SECURITY: Guard located on bottom floor, near the elevator in lobby.

TOWELS: Not provided.

COMMENTS: It's got a revolving lounge, that's the best part of this place. It's got a possible jump out of out any of the windows, as high as you wanna go.

The Hyatt

8401 Sunset Blvd.

POOL FEATURES: Rooftop. The Hyatt's a little lower class. If I'm going to sneak into a pool, I want it to be a good pool.

PARKING: Always tough to find street parking on Sunset, day or night. Wait 'til after 2:00am when all the clubs close.

SECURITY: A lot of bands stay there, so the security is kinda hard.

TOWELS: No.

COMMENTS: I prefer the Belage.

Chateau Marmont

8221 Sunset Blvd.

POOL: No afternoon light, so if it's a cool day, you don't want to swim there 'cause there's no sun. The water is not quite warm enough for night swimming.

PARKING: You have to get the parking garage guy to open the gate by the door—tell him you're going to see somebody in bungalow four. Or two. Mention the word **bungalow** and they'll probably believe you're legit.

SECURITY: You have to be sly. There's a gate, you either have to use the entrance off Sunset or jump the gate.

TOWELS: Free towels.

COMMENTS: Common sight: photo sessions taking place on the hotel grounds.

The Mondrian

8440 Sunset Blvd.

POOL FEATURES: Nice patio, nice view of LA. They don't have a Jacuzzi, but otherwise I like it a lot. Very modern design style, if you want a little high class architecture or interior design during your swim, it's got that.

PARKING: Parking is expensive, and there's not much street parking except at night. I would never go there at night.

SECURITY: Incompetent schnooks.

TOWELS: No towels.

COMMENTS: Closed for remodeling.

Sunset Marquis

1200 Alta Loma (off Sunset)

POOL FEATURES: They have a smaller back pool and bigger front pool. The best part about it is they have a roof, basically the roof of a three story building, and you can jump off into the pool. It's the most dangerous jump out of any of the hotels. You have to clear like, 15 foot of cement to get in the deep end.

PARKING: Very tight subterranean garage parking, but no charge. Sometimes there's a folded up ping-pong table against the wall on the lowest level of the garage. BYOP.

SECURITY: Lax.

TOWELS: None.

COMMENTS: A lot of poolside power breakfast meetings happen here. There's nothing like making your presence known by leaping off the roof and hitting the water with a huge splash.

Beverly Laurel Motel

8018 Beverly Blvd.

POOL FEATURES: This is an older, classic '60s sort of small hotel with first-second-third floor balconies. But once you go in, you're kicked out. This place is for a different kind of swimming. Depends what you're in the mood for.

PARKING: Ample street parking.

SECURITY: The front desk is right there so you gotta walk with confidence when you go in. It's basically good for about one minute of swimming.

TOWELS: No.

COMMENTS: Only eight feet deep so I wouldn't recommend diving.



Supervision

jake fogelnest breaks bread with michael holman

"...But don't try this at home on your dad's stereo, only under Hip-Hop supervision, all right." Those famous words from Ill Communication come from one of the most pioneering television specials in Hip-Hop history. Before YO MYV Raps, before BET and even before Breakin' II: Electric Boogaloo, there was a man with a dream that Hip-Hop would one day be bigger than Elvis—and I'm talkin' Elvis at the end when he was all drunk and messed up on Percodans and Quaaludes. That man was Michael Holman, and he created Graffiti Rock.

Graffiti Rock was a one-shot TV show that brought Hip-Hop unto the masses. I saw it when I was about six or even years old and I was just beginning to get in rap music. I remember staying up late to watch it and thinking it was the coolest thing ever. I knew I fit in with the *Graffiti Rock* crew because I had the Adidas with fat laces and would've had a Kangol if they made them in my size. After watching the show I immediately busted into my mom's record collection and proceeded to ruin all her vinyl by trying to scratch. She wasn't happy and I got into a lot of trouble over it, but I didn't care about Hip-Hop supervision, all I wanted to do was scratch.

I met Michael in the Time Cafe, the local haunt of another Hip-Hop guru, Russell Simmons. Russell Rush wasn't there (he must have been meeting with Abel Ferrar at the Bowery Bar), but you could feel his presence.

Where did *Graffiti Rock* come from?

I was an impresario on the Hip-Hop scene as far back as '78 and '79. I was walking around and saw these kids breakdancing. It was like discovering Elvis for the first time and knowing that no one had seen him before. These kids would later be called the New York City Breakers. I started getting shows for them opening for different New Wave bands. They were opening up for Malcolm McLaren's band Bow Wow Wow.

So you were sort of the Colonel Tom Parker of breakdancing?

Uh, yeah. I took Malcolm up to the Bronx and introduced him to Jazzy Jay and Afrika Bambaataa and he was really blown away. So Malcolm asked me to put together this opening act for Bow Wow Wow, using the NYCB and the guys from the Bronx. That was the first big introduction of breakdancing and rap to another audience. So while I'm out doing all of this, I'm thinking of doin' this big TV show, because I knew that the Hip-Hop scene was going to blow up.

Sort of the Don Cornelius of Hip-Hop?

Yeah. It seemed like the perfect marriage to put TV and Hip-Hop together.

So where did Hip-Hop and television first come together for you?

We started just like *SQUIRT TV* did for you. We did some shows on public access and we used those to develop *Graffiti Rock*. I found these Harvard Business grads that were producing New Edition's very first records and they were into the Hip-Hop television series idea. We showed them the public access shows and we raised about \$150,000 to finance the project.

So the people behind New Edition, today known as Bell Biv DeVoe, were the main supporters behind *Graffiti Rock*? Were you made a member of the East Coast Family?

What? I don't know about that, but they put up the money to make the pilot and it went pretty well. When we finished the show I was pretty happy with it. There were other things I wanted to do with it but that was to come if the show got picked up and were able to spend more money.

With that one show, you created a classic.

The Beastie Boys put it best, saying it was the *Spinal Tap* of Hip-Hop.

So where did you get the kids from? I mean, you had Debi Mazar [Ray Liotta's coked-out girlfriend in *Goodfellas*] in there, and of course Vince Gallo, but there were some goofy-lookin' kids in there too.

Yeah, there were some goofy looking kids. Prince Vince Gallo was one of the associate producers and he also helped me manage the New York City Breakers. We were clockin' dollars in those days. Vince's job was to get the kids together for the show.

How does *Graffiti Rock* end up as a sample on *Ill Communication* ten years later?

I don't know for sure. I met the Beastie Boys around 1989, and they came up to me and they were sort of goofing on me about it, but they were big fans of *Graffiti Rock*. Right before the album came about I got a call from Ricky Powell and he told me that they had put this sample on the record. I'm a big fan of the Beasties so I was flattered.

Have you gotten any reactions from people about it?

Yeah. Some people I know that hadn't even seen *Graffiti Rock* had recognized my voice on the record and were blown away.

So why didn't *Graffiti Rock* become the next *Soul Train*?

I don't know. The first show was syndicated in many major markets and tested very well but all the different channels at the time felt Hip-Hop was a fad and that the show wouldn't last very long.

I guess the idea was ahead of its time. But it's made a major comeback, there's lots of bootleg copies going around.

That's why at your prompting, I'm putting it out on video tape though mail order. I'm putting it out on video tape through mail

order. I mean, who knows, maybe ten years from now CBS will want to do a special on Hip-Hop and incorporate *Graffiti Rock*. It's flattering that people have told me that it's an important part of Hip-Hop culture being as large as it is today.

Word, word.

I guess the world wasn't ready for *Graffiti Rock*. It was intimidating—imagine sitting at home in Iowa and Kool Moe Dee comes on and says, "So don't touch that dial or you'll get shot, and we'll be right back with more *Graffiti Rock*." It never made it past one episode but that might make it all the more classic today.



I talked to Mike D about the importance of *Graffiti Rock* to him.

"When *Graffiti Rock* came on, all of us were shocked that Hip-Hop had made it to television. At the point it came on, Hip-Hop was more uptown and had just started to come downtown into the clubs and stuff. Before we knew it, it was on TV and we figured the whole shit was really gonna blow up and they ended up taking it off after one episode. It wasn't even until a few years later that Hip-Hop really blew up on television. I mean, it was a little goofy at the time and I have to give *SQUIRT TV* props for bringing it back and pointing out some of the finer moments of *Graffiti Rock* that we didn't even catch the first time around. Most of all when the guy with the Jehri curl does a backspin and leaves grease on the floor behind him."

To see this classic video write to: Michael Holman, PO box 1707 New York, NY 10009



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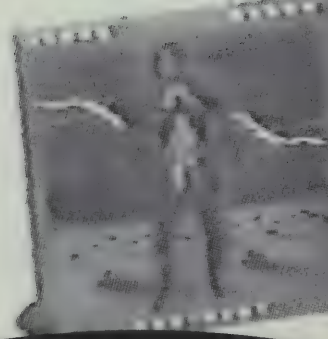


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super rare, super funky TV show

DATELINE: The dawn of the 1970s.

THE HISTORIC EVENT : James Brown (MR. Brown, that is) co-hosts *Soul Train* with Don Cornelius. First of all, imagine that—James Brown, without a doubt one of the most powerful men in the United States at the time, co-hosting *anything*. But there he was on stage, helping Don with some dance contest on the *Train*. The big moment for the kids was when the winners were announced and then congratulated by Don and James—you'd think this would be the moment of their lives, getting to meet the minister of the New New Super Heavy Funk, not to mention having the glory forever captured on national TV. The funny thing, though, is that kids were all *much* more excited to meet Mr. *Soul Train* than they were to meet James—some of them didn't even think to say hello to the Godfather of Soul.

This event may very well have been what triggered the avalanche of James Brown's unstoppable imagination, and got him to contemplate breaking into broadcasting. Because not long after the infamous *Soul Train* incident, *Future Shock*—James Brown's *Future Shock*—made the scene. Basically James' version of *Soul Train* with all the added freaky deaky funkiness, leaving no doubt about who's running the show. "Yeah Sure," says James, effortlessly addressing his captive TV audience, "You gotta give it up to *Soul Train* 'cause it was first and all, and Don Cornelius, he is the man, but *Future Shock* cannot be stopped." As always, James is right on; *Soul Train* is a great show. It's classic. But *Future Shock* is truly takin' it to the next level.

Picture this: The fiery silhouette of James floating superimposed over the dance floor crowd who mix it up to the sounds of his new album, *Body Heat*, pumping away... when suddenly James appears in the flesh, wearing only a tight black vest with the usual stylin' slacks and shoes and begins his show with a lengthy monologue—all the while his image continues to float superimposed over the dance floor.

Other highlights include James Brown in a T-shirt (the one time you'll ever see that) on the dancefloor, blending in, shaking it up, and dancing with the kid—basically doing a promotional bit to peddle *Future Shock* T-shirts for the unbelievable price of \$4.95. Crazy! But the really incredible shit is the dance contests, with dancers in the craziest styles like T-shirts being worn over big-collared polyester button downs. Everyone, of course, is sporting full afros. "Give it up for brother number five." James enthuses as a dance contestant performs with a gym bag on his head and then whips out a toothbrush from his side pocket and starts brushing the front of the gym bag, never missing a step in his dance routine. James always announces the next contestant up to dance by saying "Give it up for Brother (or sister) number..."

The winner of the contest is decided by James and some famous dude with totally funky straightened out hair—you can never figure out who the guy is 'cause when James introduces him you can't understand a word he's saying. And when the judge and James are talking and deciding on the winner, their exchange is equally indeci-

pherable. Actually, James is pretty unintelligible throughout, which only adds to the mayhem of the show and you gotta love it—it's like he's talking in code.

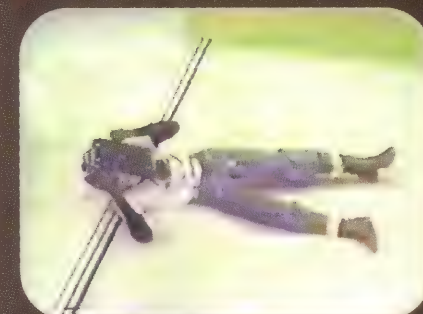
But it's when the winner of the dance contest is finally announced (the grand prize: a copy of the James' *Body Heat*) that all hell breaks loose—the dance music flares up again and all five contestants come running out onto the dancefloor, jumping all over each other, rolling around, crawling and dancing on their hands and knees. One actually crawls over to James and grabs his legs as the Godfather stands back to the side, digging all the action. James just pulls himself away, laughing the whole time and obviously loving it. He was never that easy on Bootsy.

While no truer statement has been spoken since James declared "Future Shock cannot be stopped!" the truth is that the show was shut down pretty quickly by The Man. To make matters worse for archivists looking to find this stuff, the show was broadcast back in the hazy Beta format days of the early 1970s, meaning that every dubbed copy in existence has that 7th-generation static-n-fuzz thing going on. The original masters, which could probably fetch millions of dollars today, are probably in some massive, dusty warehouse full of fly TV footage, slowly losing their magnetic information. If anyone out there knows the whereabouts of such a gold mine, give it up or turn it loose.

—Russell Simins



Stopped





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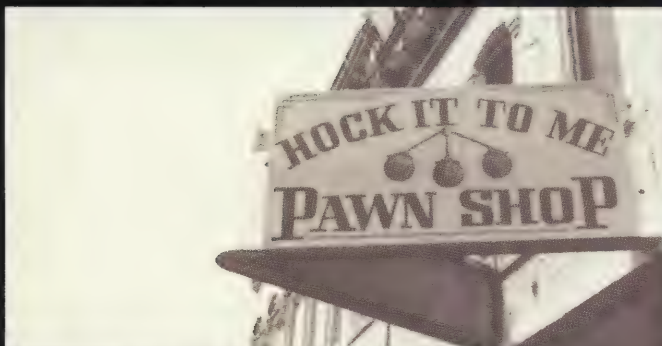
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Portfolio: Evel

the paintings of evel knievel



To the pawn shop connoisseur, Hock It To Me keeps it real, located below a vagrant hotel in a relatively seedy section of Butte, Montana—a state where even the weirdos are getting worried. Our northern Art Salvage Field Agent Carl Chapel describes it as “one of the creepiest pawnshops in Butte,” which was exactly what prompted him—a seasoned Art Salvage Pro—to step inside with same air of casual determination your mom might possess when browsing for candle holders at the Pottery Barn.

Behind Hock It To Me’s chain linked facade is the standard assortment of circa-’81 VCRs, stereos, 10 speeds, rings, and of course, tons of guns. Quickly scanning the dark interior, Carl caught glimpse of five to ten framed paintings hanging in the must. Carelessly, he succumbed to the *Thrill Bends* (an uncontrollable ecstatic rush thrift store hunters experience when they stumble upon good shit). Gaining his composure, Carl observed that the small “Shrine-like” display was made up of oil paintings and signed prints created by, and some even depicting, Evel Knievel. This was the Butte Biennale, the largest single collection of original Evel works. Jackpizzot. Unfortunately Carl had to leave before he could question the owner, who was at the counter embroiled in an exchange with a sour gun hocker that was slowly gaining intensity.

Carl returned the next day, but, disappointingly, owner Ray Long wasn’t willing to part with any pieces from the collection. The work was given to him personally by The Man, whom he befriended when Evel hung out at Ray’s tavern, Dadda Ribs, a high-plains oasis described by Mr. Knievel as, “the toughest bar west of the Mississippi”. Evel, well-rounded in all aspects of being hardcore (including drinking), spent a lot of time at Ray’s as he rocketed to fame as a Global stuntman-superstar and Butte’s most famous resident badass. In Evel’s heyday Ray even experienced a surge in business when people flocked to see and take photos of the new bricks that covered a crater in the building, created by Evel after he drove his Big Rig through the wall.

Ray has long since given up the bar for the life of art collecting and gently used goods. Evel now lives in Florida due to the arthritis he has developed from many lifetimes of bails, but returns yearly to hang out and drink at local establishments such as the Freeway Tavern and the Pisser’s Palace.

Four of the ten pawnshops in Butte have Evel Art hanging, primarily his signed prints. But none compare to Ray’s Hock It To Me collection, which properly displays the full scope of Evel’s artistic ability. This talent for paint application was fostered during the era of Evel’s numerous and lengthy hospital lay-ups, although it is unknown if the hobby continues now that his daredevil days are over. However, as you can see by the evidence provided herein, it is possible that Evel’s final triumph will be rocking the art world with his Butte style no bullshit hand skills, as he once astonished the world with his stunter.



Iron Horse Catwalk, detail

—geoff mcfetridge, with reporting and photography by carl chapel



Iron Horse Catwalk, oil on canvas



Beware, oil on canvas



Portfolio:

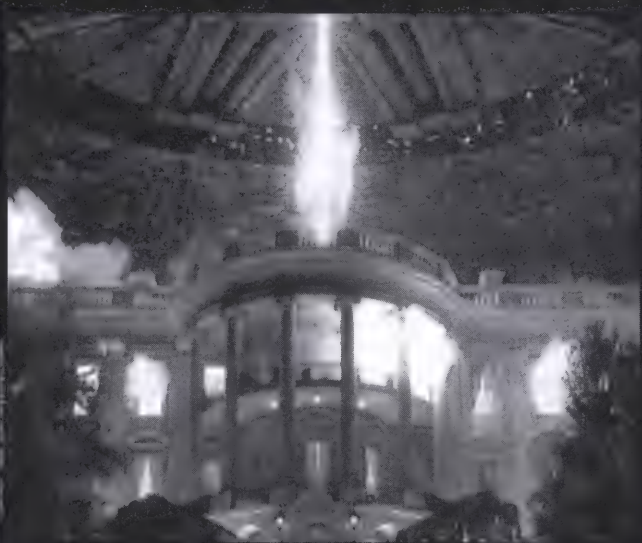
Evel

Untitled, oil on canvas

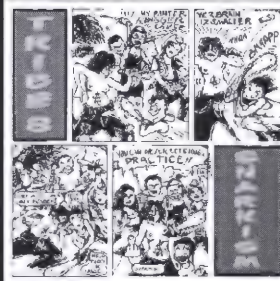


Sagebrush Prince, oil on canvas

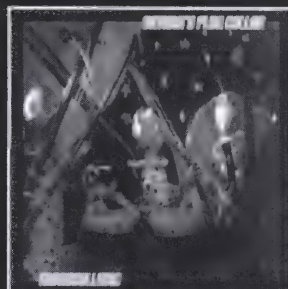
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Hectic Joints

by: **Ricky Powell**

WHAT'S THE ILLEST, MOST HECTIC JOINT YOU EVER SMOKED?

Ricky Powell's Personal Top Five

1) At Yankee Stadium with Jackie Farrey. We smoked a discreet joint and we practically had all the ushers playing SWAT looking for the perpetrators. It was hilarious, we could hardly keep a straight face. I blew it when I asked one of them for a pretzel. They pinned me and lectured me.

2) In the Oakland Coliseum dressing room with Russell Simmons and Jam Master Jay. It smelled funny but I still took a toke. Turned out it was dust and I started walking in a circle in slow motion for about 15 minutes. Then I had to go photograph Public Enemy live.

3) In Cincinnati in 1992. I was smoking a joint while two girls took turns giving me head. We were in the bathroom with about 15 people in the next room. It was kinda dope.

4) Smoked a blunt recently with one of my former students! She had the bomb, yo! That's very rare.

5) Smoked a bowl with a snake wrapped around my head, neck and shoulders while taping a segment in Washington Square Park for my show.

ZEPHYR: "Must've been the time I was smoking a joint with a fucking circus freak that could smoke pot out of her pussy."

Ricky: "You mean the bearded lady?"

Zephyr: "Nah, the bearded pussy."

Ricky: "Alright, that's interesting."

FUTURA 2000: "That would have to be a joint somebody laced with some angel dust and I didn't know about it. You know, a dust joint in disguise."

DEE DEE RAMONE: "Oh, I, Uh, can't think of answer for that. Uh, [chuckle], that's such a weird question. I've never noticed anything unusual, you know?"

SAMMY, DRUMMER FOR CIV:

"One Halloween when I tripped out and went to the fucking parade. I rolled a joint in toilet paper and the shit went up like that—*WHOOSH!* I was about 12."

JOEY RAMONE: "Uhhmmm..."

when it was called, Hog. It predated angel dust."

Ricky: "Oh, snap, where'd you get it?"

Joey: "It was in Queens."

Ricky: "AH! You mean some of that Forrest Hills shit?"

Joey: "Naah, that shit was in Le Frak City, you know."

Ricky: "Oh shit, cool. Alright man, thanks a lot."

Joey: "Damn, fix your teeth."

ROB ZOMBIE: "Nothin'—I don't smoke nothing. I like to stay clean."

SEAN LENNON: "I was in Bali, Indonesia and it was Thai stick. I went off somewhere and smoked a joint by myself and I fell on my face. For nine hours I was lying on my face and I had all these crazy visual trips. And then like the next day I woke up and I was like, 'That was the illest joint I've ever smoked.'"

DREENA DENIRO: [Smiling] "Well, I wouldn't know anything about that."

Ricky: "C'mon. Stop fronting on the posse..."

Dreena: "Darling, I'm not fronting on anybody, I just really wouldn't know anything about that [hee hee hee hee hee]". ☺

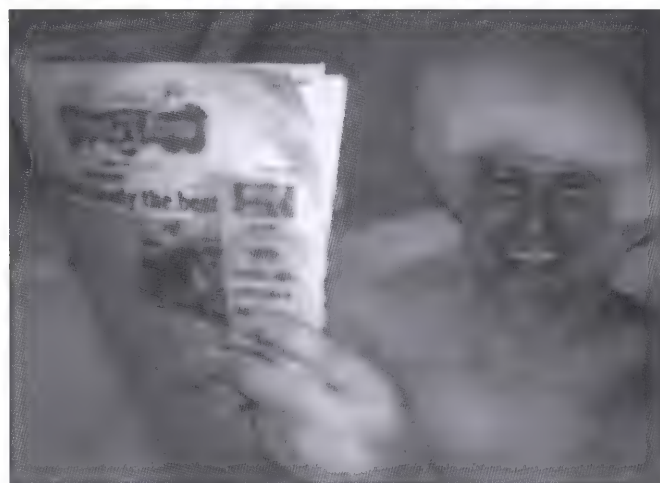
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Das Gambler



TIPS ON PLAYING THE HORSES

Bob Nastanovich of Pavement publishes The Lucky Lavender Tip Sheet; a racing hot sheet which features a user-friendly barrage of data on purple paper, with artwork from his mom. Lucky Lavender is currently distributed in local restaurants in his native Louisville, Kentucky. However, Bob predicts he will clear \$200 a day once he's allowed to sell his publication at the race track. Until that glorious moment arrives, Grand Royal tapped Bob's wealth of horse sense for a primer in racetrack protocol.



Learn how to look at horses before they race; get as close as you can to them.

They're the ones putting on the show. You want to bet on horses who have:

- a) A healthy-looking, shiny coat.
- b) Their ears pricked as they pay attention to what's going on.
- c) A bright, smart-looking head.

Avoid betting on horses who have:

- d) Washy, sweaty bodies (especially sweat between their hind legs).
- e) Their heads down and held to either side.
- f) Any noticeable limps.

Learn something about the breeding of these horses.

For example, you don't want to bet on a horse who is bred to run 3/4 of a mile on dirt in a 1 1/2 mile grass race.

Don't over-emphasize betting on jockeys. Most of these ladies and gentlemen are skilled professionals and almost all of them can win when riding the best horse in a race.

The trainer, and subsequently the trainer's record, is very important. After all, these are the folks that put in hundreds of hours with these animals. The jockeys merely ride 'em for one to two minutes. A bad trainer who can't figure out how to get their horses fit and ready for racing should not be bet on.

"The less you bet, the more you lose when you win."—sage advice from the 19th century.

The best way to consistently win money at the track is betting to win.

If you've found the best horse in a given race, don't blow it by making fancy, exotic wagers. Take the simple approach and bet

the majority of your money to win on a horse.

Maintain a level head at the track.

Don't get too distraught if you're losing; you shouldn't bet more than you can afford to lose.

Don't over-celebrate your winners.

Frankly, it's a loser's game, and there are always people around you who have lost. Not only is it selfish and unnecessary to hurt a strangers' feelings, nobody wants to get mugged with a fat wallet in the parking lot.

Isolate yourself at the track: there is a myriad of things to concentrate on and too much socializing can lead to distraction and mistakes.

Don't take the track home with you.

A sulking race track loser is an unpleasant sort—so no bellyaching. Even stories about your winners can bore the disinterested.

What to wear.

One of the beauties of the track is you can wear cut-off denim shorts and tennis shoes with no socks and a T-shirt. Some people prefer clothes with more bravado, but I find wearing a jacket and tie makes me uptight.

Don't forget to eat.

Track food is like baseball food, but there's more variety. I get the exact same thing every day, and this brings me good luck. Here at Churchill Downs they make a wonderful corned beef sandwich. Soups are always really good at race tracks. In Kentucky they serve a dark stew called Burgoo, which has chicken, lamb and beef in it.

Drinking may be hazardous to your wealth.

If you really want to stay on top, you need to be

razor sharp. Alcohol can be a really bad thing, 'cause most people abandon their sense of judgment and can't handle loosing. However, since I live across the street from the track, I'll trot home in-between races and suck down a beer on a the front porch, and run back. Usually at the end of a race day, I'm pretty tipsy.

Where to find inside information:

Before every race the trainer gives the jockey instructions, and at some tracks you can actually get within earshot of this. Another very important thing to do is watch when trainers come out of the paddock area and go to the betting windows. Get in line behind them to find out how much they're betting. Unless they have zero confidence in their horse, they'll usually bet a little bit. You want to see if they bet a hundred, which is a pretty significant amount for a horse bet. Many veteran trainers get sneaky and send a groom (he'll be the one holding the tack) to place their bets for them.

Arrive early.

The back stretch is where the action is—it's where they stable the horses. At most places, you can go in and watch morning workouts [5:30am—9:30am] and just kinda hang around, getting close to the animals, and pick up scuttle-butt circulating about horses or jockeys.

Superstitions are crucial.

I've got hundreds of superstitions, and use whatever combination necessary to maintain a winning streak. A major superstition is I only drink out of one water fountain. Say I'm betting on the 8th race, I'll take eight slugs of water right before the race. (I drink an incredible amount of water at the track). Another one is you never throw a cig-

arette butt down, you always put it in your left shoe. At the end of a racing day I'll have like 12 cigarette butts in my left shoe. Inside the shoe, in-between the sock and my foot. You never smoke during a race, so you need to put out your cigarette before the race starts.

One man's trash is another man's cash.

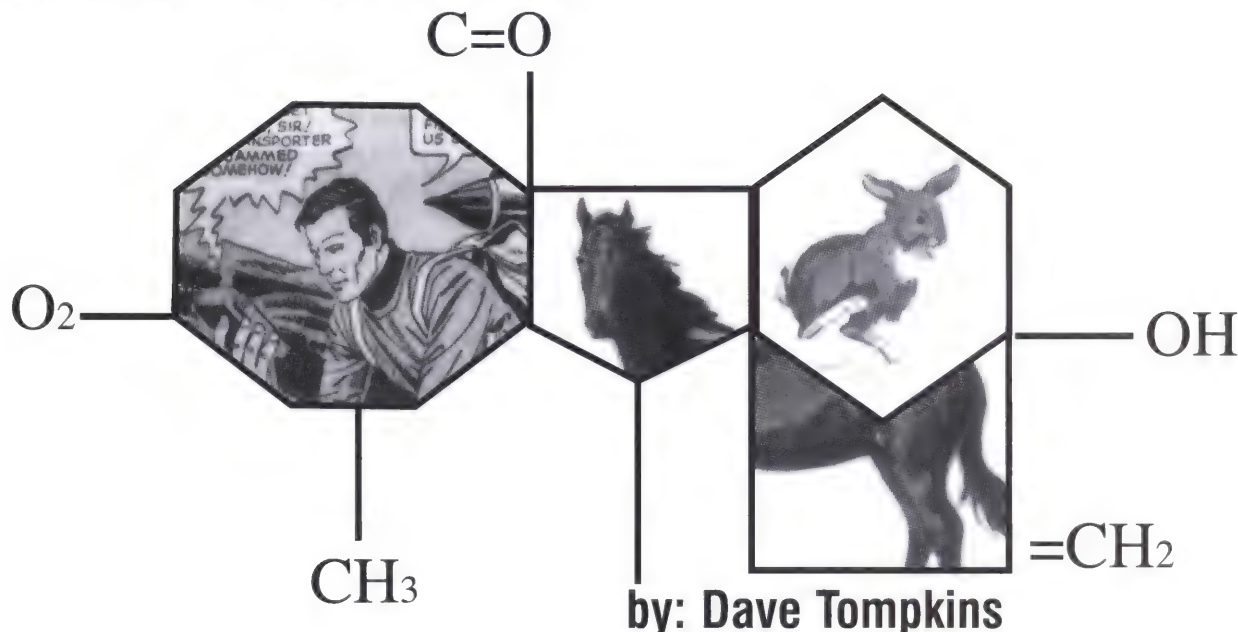
I've got this anti-litter policy, I think it sorta brings me good luck, so I like to run around and pick up people's trash and peoples tickets and throw them away. The first time I ever took Mark Ibold to the track, he thought he had lost and he ripped up his tickets and threw them down. He had actually hit the first race exactly, which was worth \$96 dollars on a \$2 bet. It took us about 20 minutes to find both halves of his ticket. In NY you see a lot of bums picking up tickets trying to find winners—those guys are called scoopers.

Sing a simple song.

During racing season I don't listen to any music at all. But I make up dumb little songs about certain horses. Say you bet on a horse with a silly name, then you make up some phrase that rhymes with that horse's name and walk around humming that. Then you sort of realize that you are indeed only in your late twenties and in a pretty sad mental state, and spend a large amount of your life at the race track, and you go through all these unusual superstitions in the hope that you'll make a couple hundred dollars and come home in a good mood. It's a pretty weird life. ☺

By Bob Nastanovich

OCTAGON ON FILM



Doctor Octagon is well-rounded. While his schtick may be molding mics in his own images, Octagon is also a philanthropist—savoring Mother Nature's beauty while giving young ladies "rabbit fits". But one species just won't suffice, as he and his partner, Sun Large Excelsior, are probing new technologies in the genetic transmutation of our furry friends in the animal kingdom. Typically up at sunrise, the good doctor embarks to the city of angels to conduct his extensive research. From empirical data collected at the Rock and Roll Denny's on Sunset, Octagon discovered many of your favorite ball players have been courting several of the family restaurant's transvestite patrons. His vast knowledge of ABA trivia has been critical to these findings. Octagon also takes time out of his busy day to be an astute movie critic and voyeur. While Adam Horovitz enjoys a fine Hershel Gordon Lewis film, Octagon is certainly not one to his his beak up at the Isaac Hayes' chandeliers nor 2069: A Sex Odyssey. Recently, he expounded on the silver screen and the hallmarks of family dining.

I hear you're working on a script.

I'd be in a new Star Trek series. A man painted all green—no, a man painted all blue with a metallic yellow mustache. His ears are yellow too. I want to re-write the script. Bring Spock's mother on there.

So what would Octagon do on the show?

Give Dr. McCoy some new medicine. Some crazy shit—a new space penicillin 'cause Captain Kirk got burnt. I used to watch Mr. Spock. Lieutenant Uhura—why didn't anybody move on her? How can you be riding around in

space for all that time, and not take her down to the sick bay?

Actually, Kirk was frisky on the set.

The Lieutenant's legs were nice—I liked the old ones.

Legs?

No, shows. The originals. Remember those guys with three big heads that would make their heads move stuff—flip rocks, look at you, make you turn upside down. Kirk was a punk. He was always on that fucking radio. I remember one time he almost got his ass kicked by a big dragon—the one with the bat. Kirk blew up the dragon. He knew his sediments and rock strata. Made some sort of powdered explosive from crushed rocks.

I like Planet Of The Apes. Zhira's fine. But, I think Cornelius talked funny. Maybe was growing another ape.

The guy who wrote that story in Details kept referring to General Urkhur...I don't remember a General Urkhur. Maybe he confused Urses with Urkel.

I want a show with lots of animals—call it Battle of the Animals. Put a horse in an octagon cage match with an elephant. It'd be tag team, two elephants against two horses. The cage would be spinning around. I would have the cage be shaken up like a bag of Shake-n-Bake 'til they get rude at each other. And throw a gorilla in there, just on the left.

What animals would you mix?

Maybe a gorilla and an orangutang mixed with a lizard.

A gorizard?

A gorizarilla.

Gorillazilla?

I like some of those Godzilla movies. He wore those rubber suits, huh? That was a man in there? I like that sound he makes. How's that go?

Aaaarrghhhwwarghunnhh...

That's some bugged shit, right?

You should see this movie called Frogs.

I want to see a Chimpanzee battle a Giraffe. I once battled an alligator.

Who won?

He did. I lost a leg. Actually, I'm standing on one leg right now. But I have another imaginary leg.

Speaking of dismemberment, what about Texas Chainsaw Massacre?

I like Leatherface. Youve gotta see this B movie...three guys with farmer's suits on. I was called "Meat" something. Meat, uh, it had the word meat in it.

Meatcleaver Massacre? Midnight Meat Train?

Maybe Chuckmeat or something.

The Chuckmeat Wagon people had on farmers suits on.

Oh...it was called Lunchmeat. They'd kidnap families and eat livers and stuff.

Really?

Yeah. Makes you kinda scared to live in the South, huh? They're got a lot of stuff out there. The Enquirer said they saw bigfoot. This guy said he shook his car up.

Texas Chainsaw Massacre was loosely based on a true story about Ed Gein, necrophiliac cannibal.

Ed Gein? And he likes to make love to dead people? Me too (laughs). Unless he likes dead animals. People skins, too. Imagine that. Yeah. We're gonna have legs tonight. (In doctored vocal frequency) Thaw those ears out. Thaw that skull out; I'm gonna cook it. Could you imagine his restaurant? That recipe? (*note: Octagon mentioned "late night dog experiments" in Melody Maker).*

In the sequel, the oldest brother had the rolling grill. He won the state chili cooking championship, but one of the judges found a finger.

What was that old man doing? Was he eating those two fingers? A lot of people didn't get that when they were trying to feed that old man. Who was on the plate? Eggs and bacon? Was it human? He was dead but they were trying to make him suck thumbs. I've gotta get part three. ENTER SUN LARGE EXCELSIOR—WHOSE RHYMES ON SELF-REPLICATING ENZYMES WERE BITTEN BY NEW YORK DAILY NEWS.

Texas Chainsaw? That was a glutinous movie. It was all about food.

How do you feel about American consumption?

One day they'll be making cheeseburgers out of people. But I like possession too. Like the third Exorcist movie. If it takes him so long to regenerate the cells of the dead, how can he have nurses crawling on the ceiling, cutting patients heads off with scissors? Precariously between evil and a sick sense of humor. Then he burns the pages off the priests' Bible and turns his hair shock white. Like Dick Versace? What about The Omen? There's an Omen reference in Lord Of Illusions. [In Amityville "get-out-of-the-house" tone] Come touch the darkness, boy! I don't like to look at that too often. That little boy is on some shit.

How about the Twilight Zone?

I like the black and white. The way they hold you perplexed to the subtle stillness of the characters. Without violence. Like the lady that had the twin that she didn't know about. The twin was the suppression of her thoughts—trying so hard to get out of her body and be somebody else—that she generated the image of seeing herself.

Invasion Of The Body Snatchers?

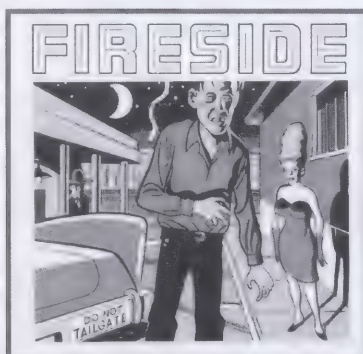
Lately, there's been of resurgence of aliens. They've been here. Subjugating humans with Republican tendencies. If we knew nuclear bombs could blow up our planet, we wouldn't make them, right? It's way beyond just trying to blow up Russians...who are doing what? Practicing democracy now? Feds blew up this Cold War, but really they were feeling an alien presence. They sensationalized something unknown to Americans, which was really just a Russian way of life.

You heard of the Mulledrens out of Kentucky? They're a human species whose spinal column protrudes as a tail. They kidnap unsuspecting picnickers.

I'm not going out like an ET cheeseburger. Fuck that. ☹

They Really Rock.

FIRESIDE

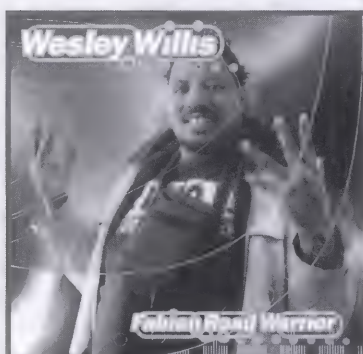


DO NOT TAILGATE

Their American Recordings Debut.

He Really Rocks Your Head.

Wesley Willis



FABIAN ROAD WARRIOR

His American Recordings Debut.

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DUSTING THE JEAN JACKET

WHY IT'S OK TO LIKE METAL AGAIN

By Mark Thompson and Ian Rogers

We know who you are. You grew up before grunge killed the Strip, in a town where your musical selection was limited to what the Recordland was willing to stock. Your musical boundaries were as punk as Duran Duran and U2, and as heavy as Ratt, KISS, and Dokken, entering your mid-teen years came mild rebellion via some tapes your best friend's older sister brought back from college; shit like Dead Milkmen and Violent Femmes. This phase was short-lived, as you soon found the heavy stylings of early Metallica and the comic metal of S.O.D. to be more your bowl of soup. These bands led you in turn to the hardcore records that actually had shelf space in the mall—you know—Misfits, Agnostic Front, Exploited, etc. A bit of research and the right hookup led you into serious DC, NYC and LA hardcore, and you quickly became less comfortable with the thoughtless, leather and hair-covered metalheads you once sided with. You even dissed groups that were once "punk" and had now "gone metal": D.R.I., Suicidal Tendencies, The Mentors, Danzig. By the time you got to college Nirvana had hit the scene and you were already strapped with enough punk records, so you could deny ever having listened to Motley Crue.

And just look at you today. You list The Melvins among your top five. You rediscovered Black Sabbath. You watched KISS Unplugged on MTV. You've got tickets to see Metallica replace Smashing Pumpkins and Sonic Youth as Lollapalooza's headline act. And you're reading this article.

Now that it costs \$23.50 to see the bands that used to cost \$3, and all your old heroes are embarrassing themselves by releasing shitty albums, what's an old punker supposed to do? Punk isn't about killing cops and Nicaraguan death camps anymore. It's not even hard. Sugar-coated, poppy crap that used to flounder as punk's retarded little brother has taken charge and stolen the house. No anger, no politics, no feeling. Just a bunch of clean kids with Manic Panic addictions.

It can leave you empty, but it doesn't have to. Think. Why did punk go to pot (other than the fact that playing three chords for 15 years gets boring)? It went to hell because it got popular. That's not an elitist statement, it's a true statement. When anything gets popular, money gets made. When money gets made, motivations shift, and things go to shit. Sorry if I have a problem with money, but when dudes sing about life on the streets and have personal trainers, something is fucked. So the obvious remedy, if you want real music, is to shift to a form of music that is still pleasurable to you, and that will never get popular. Enter metal.

I used to be of the philosophy that "You

don't choose metal, metal chooses you." I still believe that, to a certain extent, but metal speaks in voices not heard since high school. The guys in metal bands are losers. They don't get laid. They just get high, and drink a lot. They're ugly, and they have negative messages like drug abuse, Satanism, paganism, violence, factory accidents, etc. These factors all but guarantee that metal will never get more than a fluke one hit wonder and a clip on *Headbangers Ball*. That makes it safe. It also makes it good. Good music comes from desperation, hatred, and ugliness. Just look at the blues.

When I say metal, I don't mean Winger, Van Halen, Stryper, W.A.S.P. or any other leftover from Heavy Metal's brief dominance during the '80s. As far as I'm concerned, real metal started with Sabbath and skipped ahead to Neurosis. Real metal doesn't have guitar solos, it has burly taco riffs. Real metal doesn't have falsetto vocalists crooning about love, it has demons screaming about human suffering. Real metal should scare the shit out of people.

The fact is Joe Blow and Jane Plain will not listen to Cannibal Corpse or Napalm Death after a hard day of work. It takes a special amalgam of sadism and masochism to sit down and listen to an entire metal album. You can't "kind of" like it. That will keep it unpopular, and that will keep it cool. You're either in the metal boat, or you're in the ocean of human filth, where you belong.

What could be a more a sign that an end is near than an article in *Grand Royal* spewing high praise? Keep in mind this is the magazine that single-handedly made it uncool to purchase Lee Perry records until 1998. Endorsements from the Diamond/Moore/Jonze posse means death (by diffusion) to anything sacred, and metal can't possibly be an exception. 1996's Lollapalooza lineup may be telling us we're already there. Metallica might not actually rock any harder than Pearl Jam these days, but if the nation's most sterile "alternative" music festival lugs a "metal" band around the country with them this summer it'll be more than OK to shake your head and raise your lighter to the heavy metal again by fall. On an even more concerning note, bands such as Down might be pointing to many unnecessary and concerning reorderings, reformations, and reunions of metal acts past. KISS is touring with makeup. In July you could've caught The Scorpions and Alice Cooper on one stage. Cyko Miko is still kicking shit at us. What's next—Metallica takes Black Sabbath on the road the way Nirvana dragged along Screamin' Jay Hawkins? A D.R.I. reunion?

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK

The 1996 metal primer

Today Is the Day, *Today Is the Day* (Amphetamine Reptile, 1996) Real anger. Real hatred. Real songs. Steve Austin knows heavy. A kind of alienated heavy that could only come out of the American South. Their Willpower LP was the best record of 1995, hands down. On the new LP, the bass player was dropped and a moog/synth man subbed in. Heaviness that must be heard to be believed. Watch for Steve Austin as the next monster of heavy. He gets it both musically and production-wise.


16 *Drop Out* (Pessimiser, 1996)

Taco riffs. Lots of them. These might be just a bunch of old skateboarders from San Diego, but they sure as fuck got the attitude right. Take a quick sampling of the lyrics: "Life sucks leave me alone" as a chorus, "on the floor, face down, wide awake" as an entire verse (repeat as mantra), and "cannibals, devil's weed, fionical, it doesn't help, drop out" as the chorus to the final cut (not preaching against the use of such substances, merely noting how hard he tries to use them to sort out life's mysteries). If the one million boners who bought the Metallica album in its first week out would have bought this record instead, I'd have a lot more faith in my generation.

Neurosis, *Through Silver in Blood* (Relapse, 1996)

Why front with Bay Area punk when you can rock for real with Bay Area metal? You anti-metal punksters may remember Neurosis from the Lookout! Records compilation *The Thing That Ate Floyd*. Hell, you may have even purchased a Neurosis album by mistake just because they were on the same label as Green Day or Dead Kennedys (soon after wrinkling your nose and saying, "Ew. This is metal."). Those in the know already have Neurosis' *The Word As Law* (Lookout, 1993) and *Enemy of the Sun* (Alternative Tentacles, 1995) as a fixture of their soul. *Through Silver in Blood*, their first album on a decidedly metal label, will not disappoint. From ambient to moody dirge to powerful steamrolling runs, this album takes enough forms and turns to classify as an opera. Plus, it's the heaviest shit I've ever caught myself bobbin' my head to.

EYEHATEGOD, *Dope Sick* (Century Media, 1996)

Don't be fooled by the sticker on the cover warning you that this band contains a member of the crooning rock sloth known as Down. EYEHATEGOD's *Dope Sick* delivers just as much substance abuse-induced dirge and chaos as their two preceding LPs, with notably less slow time. Heavy, intelligible, and frightening. Reaching over the top of what most would consider an acceptable amount of metal, I spent two full listens staring at the lyric sheet and still haven't identified a single song to its respective set of lyrics in the booklet. 

cute van alert!

by Eric Matthies photo: Michelle Bronson



starring mike watt and his touring vehicle

This is Watt, and I drive a 1990 Econoline E-250 Ford van with 5.8 liter Windsor motor.

Do you know the current mileage?

Oh shit. Let's go look. 67,828.9.

What's the mileage from?

Touring. I bought it for touring, only.

What was the purchase price?

\$12,600, cash. I did 56 gigs in a row to buy it. It was called the Ball Bust tour. April, '90.

Any special features or modifications?

Oh, big time. I welded a safe to the floor. I put a bench seat

behind the driver's seat, 'cause it was an empty can when I bought it. Upstairs I put ah...upstairs!...in the back I built a little shelf unit where the gear could go, and above that I put a foam unit, a white shag carpet-covered foam pad so dudes could sleep. I call that area the Shelf. I put curtains up over the side windows. Curtain dividing the van from front to back, 'cause I want one they can't see in. I also put in a cassette thing up underneath the radio, so it can hold the 200 cassettes you need 'cause you burn through those motherfuckers...I can show you some racks in there [points to a room in his house], just from touring all the miles, I got at least 1,000 cassettes. What else did I put in that thing? Air vent in the back, to get some handle on the stench.

You got a favorite air freshener?

I like the, ah, what are those things called...Morsque? I think it's Morsque air fresheners...But you get desensitized. I think air fresheners are for people who come visit you in your van... 'cause you don't smell it after a day. I tell you what really gets bad. We use these things called concussion pads, which are really just pillows we put on the seat, for blowing farts, so we don't drill holes in the seat. And those things get reeked, so you kind do a little recycling at the Motel Six with them. You take the fresh ones, and you donate the, uh, no wine before it's time.

You know the top speed on it?

Well, the speedometer I think only goes to 80. I stay very close to the speed limit. 'Cause the police are...(pause)...you don't want 'em in the van. I've had so many hassles over crazy things, where I'm thinking that was it. About a month ago I had two guys from the FBI here. 'Cause on one of my tours, inbetween Denver and Lawrence, I stayed in a little city in Kansas called Junction City, and that was the same place, same day that guy rented the truck for the [Oklahoma City] bombing [laughter]. Oh yeah, it was something else. Yeah, I was there, you know, I take big walks every morning, and I saw the pad he rented the Ryder from. That was a trippy thing. I think I blew their minds. One guy looked like Lee Harvey Oswald and the other guy looked like Bill Clinton. They were a trip, though. They were trippin' on the Pettibons [Watt's apartment walls are covered with art by Raymond Pettibon].

What would your dream replacement vehicle be if this one ever failed?

I wish Toyota would build a big van. But, yeah, Econolines are the best. If I really got successful and going...I'd get another

one. I'd have two vans. I'd get a newer one—the new Club Wagon is nice. I'd get a 350. 'Cause one thing you don't want to skip out on with a van is suspension. They carry a lot of dudes, a lot of equipment, a lot of weight. I know from experience myself, hitting black ice in Wyoming about seven or eight years ago, and the van had a worn spring in it, we took a big deep dip, it put us into a spin. Luckily I didn't panic, I turned into it, did a 340°. What a nightmare. Do not skip on suspension. Or tires. One time with the Minutemen we got this deal on econo tires, and they all blew out one at a time. Side blow outs, not even running over shit. They were so cheap. You know, if the motor's bad, you just won't move. If the other stuff's bad, you gotta do the crash and tumble.

What's your gas station brand loyalty? Whatever's cheap?

Well, you know, you've got to be careful 'cause they use paraffins and lame shit in the gas, especially gas from all over the country. One thing you learn to do is never go under a quarter tank. The van I had before this, one time we were coming back from a tour and in Watts it broke down. Georgie disconnected the gas line, he was one the other end of that line blowing it like he's Gabriel from Armageddon, blowing the shit out, 'cause there's a lot of rust and stuff. I go for the newer stations, the ones that look newer, but yeah, also with a cheap price. One I try to stay away from Exxon, if I can. Exxon spilled oil up in Alaska. But basically, the ones that have a place where you can piss. [laughs] But that's what the bottle's for.

Oh yeah, talk about the piss bottle.

I've kind of adopted a new policy. I don't like 'em with lids. If it sits on the seat, the sunlight—depending on how much vitamins you're eating, obviously—but, ah, the sunlight will turn your piss clear. And I've drank my own water twice. And after that, FUCK THAT, I cut the tops off so I can't just lay it there on the seat, I'm forced to purge it and throw it out the windows.

Who is your favorite shotgun partner?

Oh. (pause) Steve Reed, my bass playin' soundman. But I like Nels [Cline] too, he's a very interesting man. Of course, you know my all-time favorite is D Boon. The best.

How did the van get that bullet hole in the back door?

Well...it's Pedro. See, it's a pretty town in the daytime, but at night...(chuckles). It's rowdy at nighttime, I don't walk around. On New Years—you should be in Pedro on New Years, it's incredible. I was laughing, laying here, see, I'm up on the hill. So you could look and see all the gun flashes in all my neighbors' yards. ☺

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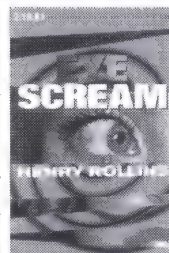
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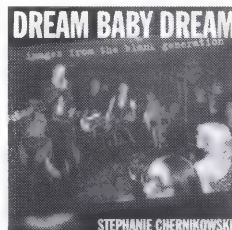
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**AIRBAG JACKING, CUP HOLDING
AND A PRIMITIVE FUTURISTIC SYSTEM**



GRAB BAG

In the '80s, car stereo theft was an epidemic on par with the equally criminal POG-collecting mania that swept through the early '90s. BMW was so notorious for radio theft that it stood for Break My Window. The threat of midnight deck removal forced people to get into pullout stereos, which nobody bought just one of. These lunchbox-sized carry-alongs would get dropped, left behind at the food court in the mall, or stolen when cleverly hidden under the seat (don't even get me started on people who just left them in the dash).

Now that stereos have security codes or detachable face plates, system larceny has slowed down along with all the car-jack hype. But there's a new game in town...

Airbag theft is becoming as common as stereo heisting was a few years back. No one seems to know where the stuff is going, let alone why. Airbags are designed to fit a particular car, and thus, you just can't sell it on the street—so it's not like some shifty character is going to hit you up with an offer you can't refuse; "Hey Bro, wanna buy an airbag setup?" There are a few theories, however, as to what's really goin' on, and a solution from everybody's favorite lo-tech bolt-on security paraphernalia-makers, the The Club people.

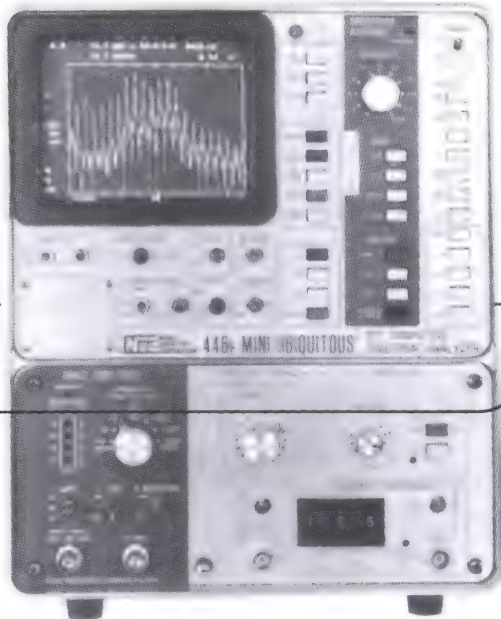
If you're parked on an isolated street (a favorite scenario among stereojackers), it is unlikely that you will return to a puddle of glass and a car with the airbag carved out of the steering wheel, as it's a complete hassle to pop them out. More than likely, if the voodoo cloud of bad luck is hanging over you, the *entire car* will be missing. Recovered stolen vehicles that still appear to be semi-drivable are often stripped of high-dollar, high-demand accessories such as wheels, seats, sound systems and airbags.

I talked to a few body shops that specialize in repairing theft recoveries, and they found it to be a growing problem—the bags are always on backorder and the parts suppliers can hardly keep up. An estimated 10% of all vehicle theft claims last year were airbags, and this number is expected to grow more than 20% over the next year; figures which indicate that airbag removal is deliberate and calculated, the equipment is definitely being cherry-picked.

Winner International, makers of the The Club, have recently unveiled the The Shield. It is placed under a The Club and has armored wings that unfold like flues on a barbecue grill, forming a steel barrier which protects your The Club as well as the airbag and steering wheel. This has positive and negative aspects, however: while airbag theft may decrease, the annoying sound of people accidentally honking their horns while trying to set up a The Shield will increase.

Of course, the motivation factor for stealing anything: This stuff is expensive to replace whether its been deployed in a collision or hacked out by a crook. A passenger and driver side set up can run anywhere from \$800 to \$1,400. Ninety percent of all airbag replacement comes from the dealerships, which are notoriously expensive, and it is almost impossible to locate used ones in salvage lots. Perhaps the epidemic is fueled by people without insurance or high deductibles, looking for a better deal on pre-owned goods. Or maybe this is all just horseshit, to drive up insurance costs or who knows what. But rest assured it's only going to get worse—by 1998 Federal Regulations stipulate all passenger vehicles must have inflatable safety restraint system.

Personally, though, I think I'll keep my old (pre-airbag) car and hope nobody fucks with it.



by ubiquitous virge
photos: Patrick Simpson

BUILT TO SPILL

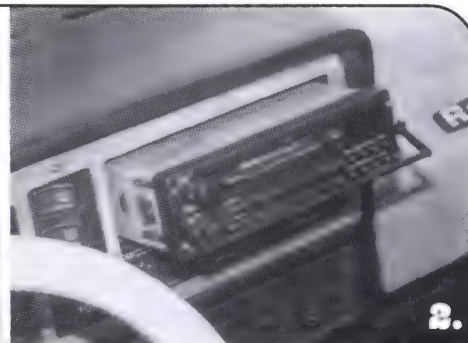
There's nothing like being stuck behind some tool driving too slow because there's a cup of hot coffee between his legs. The latest breakthrough in dashboard ergonomics and creature comforts, the slide-out drink holder, makes me happy, but not because people are driving better. I love the cup holder because they're keeping a nice flow of customers coming through my shop for stereo repairs. It's like this: You place your mocha-half-laugh-decaf-latte in the holder built into the center console. You drive. A runaway ball followed by a kid, or some other road hazard, causes you to slam on the brakes. At which point a healthy swig of your drink sloshes right into the CD player.

Japanese cars seem to be the biggest culprits of this design flaw, but Ford makes some poorly conceived shit too. The worst, though, has got to be American International (no relation to Winner International), who make a radio installation kit that accommodates an optional drink holder which fits *directly below* the deck where an equalizer would go. Guaranteed to fuck up.

So check your dash. If you've got a cup holder that's suspiciously close to your sounds, my advice is

- get a silk plant and put that in the cup holder.
- don't drink and drive.
- quit using your brakes.

And finally, if any automotive engineers are out there reading this, I would like to see an incense holder for autos, maybe a smokeless ashtray. They make ionizers for cars, so why not? Even mobile aroma therapy to accompany those spiritual growth tapes shows more practicality than a stereo sprinkler system disguised as a cup holder.



1) Harley's girlfriend's dad brought one of the first Sony car CD players over from Hong Kong, a five-disc joint which we installed in the glove box (the instructions for which weren't even in English). 2) We also dropped in a Soundstream pullout tape deck, a mobile phone, mega-watt amps, and 10 separate tweeters, mid-woofers and speakers. 3) The trunk was packed with power to boom Harley's ABC and Night Ranger CDs, and of course *Licensed To Ill*.



BUGGED OUT SYSTEM

The Golden Age of car stereos was the 1980s. In the middle of that decade, everybody was rocking deck shoes without socks and Euro-look cars: imported gray market German rides with all-white fender/bumper kits and white accessories. But while people needed a radio in their car (this was before auto manufacturers began equipping cars with so-called premium factory installed stereos), nobody was doing big, loud, crazy sound systems at the time. One afternoon in 1987, my friend Harley—who just happened to have \$8,500 burning a hole in his pocket—decided he wanted to dump all the money into his VW Cabriolet. We got on the phone and began order stuff down to my shop, Advanced Mobile Sound.

Two days later it was done; one of the premier super-custom super loud systems in L.A. *HOT VW's* magazine quickly found out about it, and Harley's Cabriolet was featured in a two-page spread in the April '87 issue—the one with the La Victoria Taco Sauce dune buggy on the cover, for you collectors out there. ☺



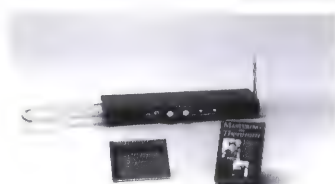
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Not to trot



Ricky Powell on the scene at a Harlem Globetrotters practice.

Yo, wassup? I'm like hanging out at home, watching sports highlights (if you know what I mean) when I get a call to go interview the Harlem Globetrotters and I was like, "Bet!" I went up to Lehman college in the Bronx and hooked up with them in the gym. I knew their squad was not gonna exactly be the old-timers, but damn, these dudes looked like kids to me. I was in a playground league myself in the late '70s—early '80s and, well, if I say so myself, I used to dribble like Curly Neal during a game. I might have looked like a retarded breakdancer, but it was effective 'cause while my opponents were mesmerized or, rather, flabbergasted, I would prance my way in for an "unmolested," or is that "uncontested," lay up.

Although things have changed for the Trotters, there are a few links to the past, like "Sweet Lou" Dunbar and Tex Harrison. Plus I rapped a little with one of my faves, Geese Ausbie, and I'll tell ya, you couldn't meet a more humble and gracious living legend than this man.

They've now acquired the second non-black player, Orlando Antigua, six-foot-seven, 210 out of Pitt University (Bob Karstens was the first in 1942-43). Since they've broken the gender barrier, they might want to give Rebecca Lobo a call, or even better how about a transvestite with tattoos like Dennis Rodman? Now that would be kinda hype. Well, maybe not.

Anyway, I headed into the gym on my quest for some quotes...

Ricky: Okay, so what's your name?

Reggie: My name's Reggie. Silky Perkins, baby.

Ricky: And where you from?

Reggie: I'm from Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Ricky: Ahh, okay. So how'd you get down?

Reggie: How'd I get down with the Globetrotters? Man, it was being in the right place at the right time for me. After playing in the CBA, I was playing in an All-Star game, the Minnesota Pro-Am All-Stars against the Flint Michigan All-Stars with Glen Rice and Marty Emmery and those guys. The owner of the Globetrotters happened to be present at the game, and weeks later I'm getting an invitation to try out for the Globetrotters.

Ricky: So wait, that was a tournament or a game?

Reggie: That was a game.

Ricky: How'd you do in that game?

Reggie: Well, I scored 33 points, so I think I did pretty good.

Ricky: And, how long you been down?

Reggie: I'm going into my third season.

Ricky: Really? You been all over the world yet?

Reggie: I've been a lot of places. Europe, South America, Asia, North Africa. We see a lot of places.

Ricky: Are you single?

Reggie: Just got married a week ago.

Ricky: Ah, congratulations.

Reggie: There you go.

Ricky: Is this the final frontier for you, or do you still hope maybe to get a shot at the pros?

Reggie: No, this is preferably it for me. Being 29 years old, soon to be 30, my ambitions here are just be part of a very rich traditional organization as an ambassador of goodwill. Just fun entertainment. I'm at that point in my life where it's all about having fun and enjoying the game of basketball and providing fun for people.

Ricky: All right. I hear that. I'm down for that. Uh...do any of these guys smoke pot?

Reggie: [pause] Wrong question.

Ricky: Na, you don't have to answer that question.

Everybody gets along?

The Rickster practicing "Gayle-like" situation technical foul shots during gym class at Seward Park high school, NYC, 1978.

Reggie: It's a family-oriented thing. A team. We're together six months out of the year.

Ricky: Is there a headquarters?

Reggie: Yeah, right now it's in California, but everything's moving as of November first, to Phoenix Arizona.

Ricky: So is there like, big portraits of Meadowlark and Marques Haynes and Curly Neal and all?

Reggie: No question. Those guys are the legends, and without them we could not exist. Not only those three, but we've got Geese Ausbie as a head coach now.

Ricky: [perking up]: Geese Ausbie is one of the coaches? Where's he at?!

Reggie: Uh, he's probably changing right now. We got Sweet Lou Dunbar.

Ricky: [pointing to players on court]: What's up with these two young bucks?

Reggie: They're both 7-footers, we're looking to add them. Two very talented young men.

Ricky: Ahh, have you guys ever gone against...ahh, that's a stupid question. I don't know. Shit, I knew I shoulda wrote some questions on the train coming up here.

Reggie: Head coach? We gettin' ready to play a little bit?

Ricky: Who's that?

Reggie: That's the head coach, Tex Harrison. He's been around for a long time.

Ricky: Really? Think I should go rap to him later?

Reggie: No question about it.

Ricky: One last question. Is there a chance a fellow like me could get a tryout?

Reggie: Of course there is man. We don't close our doors to any one person. Like I told you, our headquarters will be stationed in Phoenix, AZ and all out need to do is put together a basketball video tape and send it in, and if you got basketball skills, the Globetrotters don't close the door to anybody.

Ricky: Cool, I like that.

[More wandering around ensues, with Ricky approaching a new player, identified only as "Tiny"].

Ricky: What's up with you kiddo?

Tiny: Just working out. Trying to get to know the fellas.

Ricky: You get treated like a rookie.

Tiny: They kid me a lot. This is my rookie season, so it's cool.

Ricky: Are you single or married?

Tiny: Single.

Ricky: Do any single ladies come to the games?

Tiny: I don't know. This is my first year. I haven't played a game yet.

Ricky: Did you play college ball?

Tiny: University of Texas, San Antonio.

Ricky: What do you think of Dennis Rodman's style?

Tiny: He got his own.

Ricky: Very diplomatic. All right, chilly, chilly. Wish you luck. Watch out for the schnitzel in Germany.

Tiny: You watch out for the Thunderbird.

Ricky: Aw shit!

[Prowling the sidelines, Ricky gets hit with a stray ball].

Ricky: Sorry.

[A few minutes later Ricky makes direct contact with one of the Globetrotter's all-time greats, Geese Ausbie. Ricky pounces at the opportunity].

Ricky: Here I am with the man, the myth, the legendary Mr. Geese Ausbie. How are you?

Geese: Fine. And you?

Ricky: Good. You're lookin' great.

Geese: Oh, thanks. I feel great too. I feel like I could run full-court right now.

Ricky: Really?

Geese: Yep.

Ricky: So how you like your new club?

Geese: Oh golly, it's all young kids here, they're real strong. We're gettin' ready to go overseas and play with the Kareem All-Stars.

Ricky: Oh yeah?

Geese: We gonna fare real well.

Ricky: What kinda all-stars?

Geese: Ah, Kareem Abdul Jabbar.

Ricky: Oh, the NBA former All-Stars?

Geese: Correct. We're in training camp now and probably leave Tuesday for Europe.

Ricky: Tremendous. Are you single or married?

Geese: I've been married for 35 years. I've got three daughters and one son and two grandkids that will hopefully grow up to be Globetrotters.

Ricky: You keep in touch with the older guys? Curly?

Marques Haynes? Is he still around?

Geese: Marques is still around. Curly is with the Orlando Magic basketball team. Meadowlark is a preacher now. Everyone's doing well.

Ricky: Mind if I take a picture with you?

Geese: As long as it doesn't break the camera.

Ricky: Thanks a lot Mr. Ausbie. You the Mango.

[Photo is snapped].

Ricky: Can I ask you one question? Have you heard about this kid that's playing in the summer tournament?

Rafael Austin? Skip to my Lou? This kid I hear plays with a cellular phone in his sock. And he comes down on the break and I've heard that he comes down while he's talking on the phone and says, "Yo, I gotta shake somebody." Is that a new one on ya?

Geese: That's new on me. But I'll tell ya, we got guys from Harlem and Brooklyn here that can put a dollar in change up on top of the backboard and replace it with two quarters. You heard that one before?

Ricky: Yeah, I heard that one. Let me ask you one last question. What's the chance of a guy like me getting a try out? They used to call me Pearl Powell in the '70s.

Geese: Did you bring your stuff? I'll get seven-foot-two over here to go against you.

Ricky: I'll take Peanut. Oh, that's what I wanted to ask you. Do you know the Harlem Wizards?

Geese: I know some of those guys.

Ricky: What's up with the girlies?

Geese: The one we had last year decided to go into

coaching. So we have a new girl trying out for the team.

Ricky: Do you miss that aspect, or you could take it or leave it?

Geese: The ladyfolks get very excited because there are girls down there too.

Ricky: Well, thanks. [Goes to shake...] My hands are a little clammy, I'm a little nervous.

POST GAME REPORT: Well wouldn't ya know it? I jinxed them. They lost their first game (91-85) in like 25 years (8,829 wins) over in Vienna against a team of former NBA All Stars led by Kareem-Abdul Jabbar (34 points) and Bob McAdoo. ☹



From *The Harlem Globetrotters* CBS Saturday morning cartoon.
(L-R) Dribbles the mascot, Meadowlark, Granny, Curly, Geese (on the roof), J.C., Pabs and B.J.

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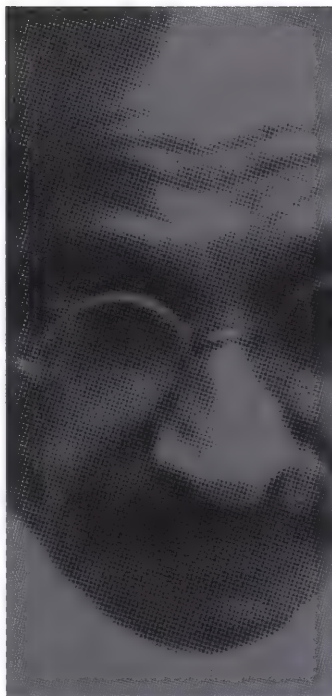
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Gandhi's got the 10.5

My Two Cents and How I'm Spending It

By Josh Schrei

Currently topping my list of bad ass mother fuckers under five foot two, Mohandas K. Gandhi was no joke. The man was so punk rock, he spun his own clothes, alright? He stuck to his principles and motivated about four hundred million people to stand up for their rights and gain freedom for their entire country. And he did it all without using violence. That's what separates Gandhi from all the other revolutionaries out there. Unlike Castro, Guevara, and Lenin, Gandhi's revolution succeeded because he showed that he was truly different from the people he was struggling against. He wouldn't take the easy way out and use terrorism to achieve his goals. He knew that a revolution based on violence can only bring about a society whose existence is maintained through violence. He knew that if we use violence to achieve our goals, then we're no different from those we're struggling against.



Hardcore activist, Henry David Thoreau

Gandhi drew a lot of his inspiration from another hardcore activist, Henry David Thoreau. Way back in 1845, Thoreau was already experimenting with environmentally conscious, sustainable living. He later wrote *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*, a work that has inspired revolutionaries for years to come.

"How does it become a man to behave toward this American government today?", Thoreau once said, "I answer that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it."

The utter determination of Gandhi and Thoreau directly inspired civil rights leaders in the 1960s, a period when activism in this country reached its peak: Malcolm X, the March on Washington, the Black Panthers, the Civil Rights Movement, the Chicago Democratic Convention...

After 1968 and the assassinations of Bobby Kennedy and

Martin Luther King, there was a serious decline in activism in America. In 1970, four college students protesting US involvement in Cambodia were shot and killed by police at Kent State University. That pretty much put a lid on radical youth activism.

Youth activism is emerging again as a dominant movement in America. More and more kids are fed up with the media's constant portrayal of anyone under the age of 35 as a slacker, and are showing their discontent through nonviolent activism. Women's rights groups, environmentalists, and animal rights advocates have been at the forefront of the recent surge in activism.

I myself am of the opinion that there is more to protest against now than ever. As Nathaniel Hornblower always says, we are at a critical point in planetary evolution. More and more people are using violence and terrorism to try to solve problems. It's up to all of us to act with integrity and use nonviolent means in our protest, and to support all the people around the world who are peacefully persevering in their struggles for freedom.

Right now, American corporations are contributing to horrendous human rights abuses all around the world, so a perfect avenue for youth activism is to target these corporations. Countries with the worst human rights records are attracting more and more American corporations.

Companies like Nike and Reebok have ignored the murderous practices of the Chinese government and are making a fortune producing goods in China. This is partly because labor costs are really cheap in China, where currently ten million people are working in forced labor camps, producing goods that we buy every day.

The Chinese government is also carrying out a devastating genocide in the peaceful Buddhist country of Tibet. Under Chinese rule, over one million Tibetans have been killed and hundreds of thousands more imprisoned. With no freedom of speech or religion in Tibet, the situation is becoming desperate. But the Tibetans are steadfast in their nonviolent beliefs and resist the Chinese government peacefully. Today, the Tibetan Freedom Movement is one of the largest nonviolent movements in the world.

Unfortunately, you and I fund the Chinese government's brutal oppression by continuing to buy items made in China. Whenever we buy these goods, part of that money goes to the

Chinese government, which uses that money to fund its military oppression. That's why over 120 organizations worldwide are participating in a boycott of all Chinese goods, in protest of these human rights abuses and US corporations' involvement in perpetuating these abuses. By participating in this boycott, you will be supporting the Tibetan people's non-violent struggle for freedom.

If you want to join on, boycott all goods that are labeled: Made in China. What are these items, you ask? If you want to do a simple experiment, strip naked right now and check the tags on every piece of clothing you own. I guarantee you'll find that some of your clothes are made in China. Chances are those clothes were not manufactured under ideal conditions. Chinese made products aren't just limited to clothing and footwear. Televisions, toys, phones, toasters, cellulose wadding and Remington micro blades are also made in China.

Since November is coming up and our nation is again presenting us with a vast choice for the Presidency, it's time to get motivated and register to vote. I know, I know—the idea of lining up at the polls on election day and waiting for hours so you can choose between Bill or Bob isn't that enthralling. But if neither of them do it for you, check out Ralph Nader, representing the Green party.

The time is ripe to speak out against the way the world is currently being run. We can show that we have the courage and integrity to support human rights everywhere and to use nonviolent means in the process. Corporations gotta change their ways before it's too late. In the words of the immortal Chuck D., "The corporations they owe, they gotta give up the dough to the town, or else we're gonna shut 'em down."

It's up to us.

On a serious note, I deeply respect all you who strive to maintain a noncorporate ideology. Your resolve inspires us all. If you want more info on nonviolent activism, check out *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, by Gene Sharp. If you want to find out more about Tibet, Gandhi, Thoreau, Veg-O-Matic juicers, or Asian exfoliation techniques, call me at 1-888-MILAREPA. Additional respect given to those who got the ball rolling: Rosa Parks, Aung San Suu Kyi, The Dalai Lama, and to all you out there who carry on the tradition of nonviolent action and protest. **S**

The US China Business Council is a pro-China lobbying organization consisting of over 200 corporate members. It uses its considerable economic power to block any measure that might upset business relations between the United States and China. The Council prides itself on being the main force behind the annual approval of Most Favored Nation status for the People's Republic of China, and was instrumental in President Clinton's May 1994 decision to de-link human rights and trade. The council also lobbies against US criticism of China's human rights record and any deviation from the "one China" Policy, which states that Tibet, Taiwan, East Turkestan, and Inner Mongolia are inseparable parts of China. The US China Business Council well understands that the American public does not share its disregard for human rights. Therefore, they stay behind the scenes, out of public scrutiny.

These companies are drawing fire for their abuses in China, Burma, Indonesia, Central America, Nigeria, and around the world. Their position is that economic development leads to improved human rights conditions, when in fact, the US China Business Council works against advances in labor rights for the simple reason that they will make more money by maintaining the status quo.

To find out more about what you can do to help remove the power from the hands of corporations listed as voting members within the US China Business Council, contact:

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2. Mark finds the party erotic.



3. Mike Diamond and Spike Jonze have plenty to discuss.



4. Rico Suave!



5. Mike cracks himself up.



6. Adam chokes Maurice.



7. Drum Clinic.



8. "California knows how to party."



9. Perry losing obligatory relay race.



10. Maurice smells the thrill of victory.

The Tibetan Freedom Concert

Starring: Maurice da Bunny
Photos: Jenna Felling

AFTER AFTER PARTY



11. Maurice smells himself.



12. The Red Hot Chili Peppers.



13. Russell reflects on the day's events.



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AN INTERVIEW WITH THE DALAI LAMA

By Adam Yauch

photo: Sue Kwon



In 1991 while trekking in Nepal, I crossed paths with a group of Tibetan refugees. They had just crossed the Himalayas in little more than old clothes and ripped up canvas sneakers. A sherpa that was with us translated as they explained that they would not go back to their homeland until it was free from Chinese occupation. There were about 30 of them ranging from young kids to old people. A few were monks and nuns, and most of them were in their late teens or early twenties.

They were heading to see their spiritual and political leader, the Dalai Lama, in Dharamsala, India, where he lives in exile. They still had a long journey ahead of them. If the Nepali authorities found them, they would be sent back to Tibet and have to face the Chinese authorities. What struck me at the time was that, although they had just crossed these high snow-covered passes with barely any possessions, they carried themselves in a way that resonated love and kindness. There was something powerful about these people.

When I finally went to Tibet last year and walked around Tibet's most holy temple, the Jokhang, I felt as if I was half-dreaming. The smiles and eyes of the Tibetan people cut deep into my soul. For me to talk about it is like trying to describe music to someone who's never heard it before. Tibet is deeper than words can describe.

Recently I had the honor of interviewing his Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet. It was the fourth time I'd gotten to sit down and speak with him. With each meeting, he seems to be more and more inspiring and incredible. In one sense, he is just a human being, a kind man with a friendly smile and laugh. But there is something more going on. There is an extraordinarily powerful energy that emits from him. It is more powerful than anything I've encountered elsewhere. It is dizzying to be in his immediate vicinity. Tibetans say that he is the incarnation of Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of compassion. I have yet to meet anyone or hear of anyone who has met him that has not had the highest praise to offer. He seems as though he is always happy and always friendly to everyone.

Even in the face of the genocide and cultural destruction in Tibet by the Chinese government, the Dalai Lama has always advocated nonviolent resistance and compassion for all beings. While leading his people in their struggle for freedom, he has always taken the well-being of the entire world into account. He does not make his decisions based on what will most benefit himself or his people alone, but rather based on what will most benefit the entire planet, the entire human race, the entire universe.



photo: Sue Kwon

This interview was originally intended to run in Rolling Stone magazine, however, they decided to only publish a brief excerpt, so here it is in its entirety.

Can you talk about universal responsibility?

I believe that forgiveness, kindness and compassion are important qualities because they make up humanity's sense of community. These qualities also serve as a foundation for mental calmness and stability. The future of humankind depends on them. It is my duty, as a citizen of this planet, to contribute as best I can to universal well-being. Because of technology, the world is becoming a global community and we are realizing that we are all related to one another. Many of today's issues, such as the destruction of the environment, and current economic systems transcend borders and are thus global issues. Therefore, everyone needs to share a sense of universal responsibility. I have always thought that people are the same, everywhere. Differences of race, culture and religion are unimportant. Because we are all the same, we need to have a sense of responsibility for each other's well-being.

Does this relate to the Buddhist understanding of interdependence?

Well, there are many different levels of understanding interdependence. On the more conventional level, we have the relationship between cause and effect, but on a deeper level of understanding, interdependence is more pervasive and encom-

passes the entire spectrum of reality. So in one way, every event is entirely dependent on what its causes are, then the causes themselves upon other causes and conditions. So from this, we can gain realizations. For example, if we want to avoid or overcome certain negative consequences, we have to deal with the causes and conditions that create them. Once we realize that the causes of everything are dependent upon other causes and conditions, it will give us a way of looking at the world, where our response to events will not just be a response to a symptom but to the cause of that symptom. Then when something arises, rather than immediately responding, we can actually cope with the situations at a much earlier stage so that we can prevent a situation rather than react to it.

And how could we look at this in terms of human rights situations?

For example today, the violation of human rights is a symptom with underlying causes so in order to reduce or remove altogether the violations of human rights, we have to first deal with the causes. They could be political reasons or economic reasons or in some cases, the human right violations may be based on personal vengeance or revenge on the part of the





photo: Sue Kwon

rulers. So there could be many different underlying reasons for violations of human rights.

Could you talk a little about the situation in Tibet. Do you feel optimistic about a peaceful settlement to that situation?

Yes, but first we must find some common ground for dialogue and negotiations. I am ready to negotiate, anyplace, anytime, without preconditions. The most important thing, whatever the place and time, there should be a free atmosphere to exchange different ideas. Independence rightfully belongs to Tibetans. Since the Chinese occupied Tibet, despite some positive changes, the people have suffered tremendously, immeasurably. As a result, the majority of the Tibetan people, including young Tibetan communists, do not want to live under Chinese domination. But if we just insist on complete independence, that is also not realistic. So I am pursuing a "Middle Way."

Is it possible that we might wait too long to deal with the situation?

With the Bosnia problem, I felt the international community was a little bit too late. These unfortunate events had many causes and conditions that took years to develop. At the time that these causes and conditions were developing, if we had taken serious notice then, perhaps it would have been much easier to deal with. Unless we carry out some research work at the causal stage, unless we pay specific attention, often it's not very visible what's wrong. Because it's not always obvious when causes are building up for a potential crisis. Then at some point we realize that we should have paid greater attention to what was going on.

How can we use an understanding of interdependence to keep our emotional

responses from running wild and controlling our lives?

Well, usually our emotional reactions are extreme. If positive things happen, we feel a lot of excitement. If negative things happen, even if it's a small thing, we feel a lot of anger and frustration. That leaves us with more problems. Because the way we see things is so black and white, so stark, we lose our mental balance which leads to more trouble. One way to remedy this might be to view it as "oh this is very bad," but compared to something else, "oh, it's not that bad." Some things are good, but when compared to something else, it may not be so good. In this way, our mental attitude may become more stable. I think in our daily life, if we can take advantage of new experiences and new outlooks that are based on understanding the nature of interdependence, then our lives can run more smoothly and we will find more happiness.

Are there any other aspects of interdependence that you want to go into?

We could look at the interdependence of human beings, animals and the environment. Or another way of looking at interdependence is to see that good and bad depend on one another. One event compared to something is negative but compared to another thing, it is positive. So that kind of interdependence is called relative nature. One of the things we can learn through understanding interdependence is the relative nature of events. When we say certain events are negative, we have a reference point and in relation to that we take it as negative. In relation to something else, it could be positive. The comparative status, the relative status of events, can be understood. Once we realize the relative nature of events, this will enhance our out-

look and make us richer in our ways of dealing with events.

You mentioned a deeper meaning of interdependence.

Yes. There is a much subtler philosophical understanding of interdependence. There is a deeper meaning of interdependence where you're looking at events in terms of how mind relates to matter, or to the material world through that interaction. Here at this level, looking at everything, if you try to find the substance, you cannot. So then, the conclusion is that everything is designated by mind, by thought. Now that aspect of interdependence is more subtle and that level of meaning may not be that relevant for the average person. But from a religious point of view, for people who espouse these philosophies it may have greater significance.

I've heard you say in interviews before that the Chinese authorities, even though they've caused so much destruction in your country, have been a great teacher for you. I've heard you talk about doing meditations of give & take where you visualize giving positivity or compassion to them and taking on some of the anger or hatred that they're working with. I think for a lot of people in America, that's hard to imagine. A lot of times in America, it's real easy to think of your enemies as your enemies and your friends as your friends.

The very concepts of "friend" and "enemy" actually depend on many conditions. The reality is that the status of our friends and enemies can change, whether it is within a year, a decade, or many decades. Our enemies are not necessarily permanent enemies, nor our friends permanent friends. I think our perceptions of

"friend" and "enemy" depend on our mental attitudes. We tend to perceive those who we think of as our enemies as almost like they are forever and absolutely our enemies. With those we consider our friends, we tend to think of them as absolutely our friends, unchanging and eternal. Yet the reality is that there is always the possibility of change. Therefore it is possible to change our attitudes according to this reality. The reason why this practice of giving and taking can be effective is because in reality enemies and friends do not enjoy permanent status. They can be changed, they can be transformed. Because of that, you can engage in practices like giving and taking, which would enable you to bring about that change within yourself.

But what if we still have strong emotions within ourselves towards our enemies?

Well, we may feel pain and discomfort when we meet an enemy and happiness when we meet a friend. These fluctuating emotions, if you look carefully, are often the results of mental projections. Because of these mental projections, the practice of giving and taking can affect a change in yourself. I think first that enemies are ordinary sentient beings who are suffering or undergoing painful experiences, just like yourself or your friends. But mentally speaking, you should take some of the pains and causes of these pains. Sometimes you can have a spontaneous feeling when you see a poor person who may be totally unknown to you, but when you see them you may have an immediate feeling such as "I wish I could give something." Through visualization, you actually give your positive motivation, your positive energies. Then eventually it extends to your enemy. So of course before you even begin to practice giving to your enemy, you must have a basic recognition of the enemy's equality to yourself, and a grasp on the fact that the enemy is also a sentient being like yourself who can suffer. Like you, your enemy does not want to suffer, and has the same desire for happiness. So that recognition should be there. Taking negative things and giving out positive things may not solve your problems, but at least mentally, it is very helpful to reduce unhappiness or uncomfortable feelings especially within yourself. If I go around expressing hatred, ultimately I'm the one who's going to lose my appetite, lose sleep and lose my peace of mind.

Can non-Buddhists practice give and take?

Christians believe that all creatures were created by God, so even in the Christian sense, human beings are all brothers and sisters. On that basis, you can practice take and give. It can be quite easy if you have that outlook. Even non-believers can prac-

tice take and give for friends. But I don't know about extending it to your enemies (very sweet laughter). Maybe you need to wait until the enemy gives you a gift. (more laughter).

Many people speak about "global disarmament," but you are the first person that I've heard speak of "inner disarmament." Would you explain what that means?

If we try to reduce all motivations which lead to conflict, that is inner disarmament. If these motivations are very strong and if conditions are ripe, then armed conflict results very naturally. Feelings of revenge and hatred are very powerful motivations, as are feelings of greed, jealousy, vengeance and negative ambition. These all lead to conflict. One of the most effective antidotes in overcoming these negative tendencies is examining the nature of these emotions on the basis of one's own experiences of their consequences. Observe the consequences of these emotions in others like friends and neighbors. Look at history: how many armed conflicts have been due to these negative emotions and thoughts? Through this way, we can gain a powerful attitude that will confront the arising of these negative tendencies.

A lot of people in western society think of power as something that's gained by controlling other people or having a lot of wealth. By being around you, I really felt that true power is in compassion, that true power comes from a sense of realization about oneself and from inner disarmament. I just wanted to ask if there are ways that you can suggest that I or somebody else could work to cultivate that kind of inner strength.

Some people think that being nonviolent is a sign of weakness or passivity. However, I believe that violence goes against human nature and that nonviolence is a sign of strength. Violence may solve some problems but frequently it causes a whole set of other problems. Even if your goal is good or just, using violence as the means of reaching that end may corrupt the inherent goodness of the goal.

Was it hard being recognized as the Dalai Lama at such a young age?

When I was a young boy, sometimes I thought that I would have had it much easier as a regular person than as the Dalai Lama. I would usually have these feelings while alone in my room in the Potala Palace, which was often cold and uncomfortable. I would watch the local children return from tending animals and hear them singing songs and laughing while I had to sit in my lonely room and recite difficult prayers. But then as I grew older, I understood the purpose of life, which I think is to live your life for the benefit of humankind and all sentient beings. As humans, we



have intelligence and determination; we can use these qualities to face our problems. It is good, too, that challenges exist so that we can exercise these qualities. So from that viewpoint, knowing that we are capable of doing something about our problems can be a source of satisfaction. Also, facing our challenges can give us inner strength.

What can we do as individuals to contribute to the betterment of the world?

I feel that we as individuals need to develop compassion and a sense of brotherhood/sisterhood. By compassion, I do not mean simply feeling sympathetic. Proper compassion means a feeling of closeness with others and with that, a sense of responsibility. I believe that at birth, human beings are free from ideology but not from affection. Although anger and negative feelings are part of human nature, love and compassion are even stronger within us. ☸

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WORKED at the

Car Wash

Mark Gonzales; buffed, waxed and detailed. Sunset Car Wash, summer 1996.
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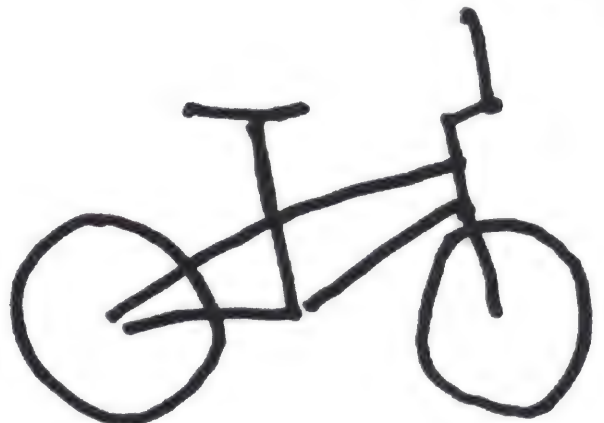
(see insert between pages 50-51)

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Wash your garment first to assure successful application of the transfer.
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- 3) Clean all hair, insects, body lint, country gravy, etc. off garment and smooth out wrinkles from area to be decorated.
- 4) Place transfer (ink side down) on garment.
- 5) To transfer the design, move iron in a circular loopy motion while continuously applying medium pressure. Hum Sebadoh songs to yourself absentmindedly.
- 6) Continue to move iron over entire design area for about 60 seconds. TAKE YOUR TIME. Remember to iron all the tips, edges, and fine lines of the transfer.
- 7) Allow garment and transfer to completely cool before continuing.
- 8) Slowly peel the backing paper from the design. NOTE: If any part of the design is not adhering to the fabric, stop peeling the paper and replace the backing over the design. Then, repeat steps 4 through 7.
- 9) Turn garment inside-out to launder. Use only cold or lukewarm water. You may tumble dry garment on medium or low heat setting.
- 10) If garment requires ironing, use low setting and iron on reverse side or place a cloth over the design.
- 11) DO NOT DRY CLEAN and NEVER apply a hot iron directly to the design, your hands, furniture, food, etc.
- 12) Put on garment and dance a jig on the bridge.



FALL LINE



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The Gonz. The next day he was sighted, minus half an eyebrow, in a health food store by Mike D. ☹

www.Weirdo.com AL

Large enough to claim the title of best selling novelty record artist of all time, Al is not simply some guy in loud clothes and fucked up hair who abuses puns. His retooled versions of smash hits and incessant polka medleys have earned him folklore hero status, yet he's pretty humble about it. Instead he chooses to use his clout and circulation to spread a simple message to all earth people: don't take yourself too seriously.

So the decision to do a the *Grand Royal Interview* with Al was easy and unanimous. Our primary concern; what worthy opponent could we send in to face off with a legend like Al?

Enter 6-foot-plus-while-slouching Russell Simins, indie rock beat-keeper and certified Yankovic superfan. Russell's extensive knowledge of all things Al—which includes a library of Weird Al documents, recordings, and videos—not to mention an unparalleled enthusiasm for this project, lured Mike D into the foray as co-interviewer. Mike even went so far as purchase a new Radio Shack tape recorder and shoulder holster for the event. Originally scheduled in late 1995, the first interview attempt was a fucking disaster due to an email snafu that had Mike and Russell cooling down after a session on the court, oblivious to the fact that clear across town, Al was glued to a booth in Hawaiian restaurant, boiling over after waiting an hour for his no-show inquisitors (a scene recreated here by famed courtroom illustrator Ben Pjörn).

It took nearly five months of coaxing before Al's keepers relented with our numerous requests to reschedule, finally agreeing to an interview to coincide with the onslaught of publicity generated by the release of Al's 16th record, *Bad Hair Day*. We waited until Russell was in town with the Yoko Ono/IMA tour, booked the Tea Room in the posh Beverly Hills Hotel as ground zero, and added the final ingredient into the mix: Spike Jonze, in deep cover as an obsessed and seriously injured Weird Al fanatic.

Russell: I just saw your new video ["Amish Paradise"] for the first time. It's pretty cool. It's the shit, of course, again.

Al: (giggles) Thanks.

Russell: But, you had no mustache, so it kinda threw me off. You had no mustache for the "Ricky" video, too.

Al: Yeah, but that was like, '83. We did the shots of me as myself early in the morning when I'm playing with my band, then I shaved it off and I did all the stuff as me as Ricky Ricardo. It was a big decision. My manager, actually, was pretty dead set against me shaving my mustache because...

Russell: It's your *identity*.

Al: Yeah, I'm kinda like this walking cartoon—I'm like this icon, in a way—and, ahh, it would throw everybody's view of the world off-balance if I appeared in public without a mustache. I was pretty dedicated to making this a realistic video, and, ah, the Amish don't have mustaches.

Russell: That's the thing. You seem to go waaay out, and just, every detail. I mean, it's pretty impressive.

[in the background] Mike: I'll have aaah...chamomile tea.

Russell: I'm a, we're all, both huge fans, yeah I'll just have mineral water, actually.

Al: Yeah, same.

Mike: Yeah, I'll have a mineral water as well, in addition. Yeah [coughs. Long pause as they look over menu]. You hungry Russell?

Russell: Mmmnot really.

Mike: You ate already? I gotta eat.

Russell: Kinda.

Mike: Wonder what the vegetable gazpacho, I'll find out if that has no, ah, no funky business. But angel hair *pompodoro*, (laughs), I think I could have *that*.

Russell: That angel hair pompodoro here is *amazing*. I had that last night.

Mike: The pompodoro was working?

Russell: Yeahyeahyeahyeah. It's *really* good.

Mike: The pimpo-doro?

Russell: Yeah, it came complete with a pompadour.

Al [to Mike]: You're a vegetarian too. That's (trails off...)

Mike: Yeah.

Russell: So yeah, you're a vegetarian, so what's up with the burger in "Like a Surgeon"?

Mike: Yeah, I was, see, I was wondering about that. Did you have to have a real burger?

Russell: You see burgers in a lot of things you do. There's the—

Al: —Actually, I only went vegetarian like four or five years ago.

Russell: Okay, so it actually was a real burger...

Al: —Yeah, in fact, when I'm eating Twinkie-wiener sandwiches in my movie, *UHF*—

Russell: There you go—

Al: —those were actual, Twinkie-wieners there.

Russell: That's a fine sandwich.

Al: (giggles).

Russell: Anyway, what's always fascinating to me, is how detailed and how meticulous you are with everything you do. The *moves* in the Michael Jackson stuff. And the *moves* in the James Brown stuff. And the clothes and the makeup, for like, the Nirvana stuff. I mean, how long did it take you to get those moves down, the Michael Jackson moves?

Al: I'm a total non-dancer, so it took a while to even approximate anything resembling the original moves. And for some of those videos, like for the Michael Jackson and James Brown videos, I did work with a choreographer. But I had storyboarded everything fairly tightly in advance. I said I want to copy this shot exactly and this shot exactly.

Russell: You sorta get it down, but you also, like, *don't* have it down. Which kinda makes it cool.

Al: Well, some of the humor also comes from that. I mean, I'm really trying hard to copy the moves, but because I'm like this "awkward white guy" trying to be cool...I mean, that's...

Russell: So, would you consider yourself to be obsequious? (dramatic pause)

Al: (inhales sharply) Heeheeheehee.

Russell (laughing): Like, like like....

Mike: That's the new learned, the new word we've learned.

Al: (laughing)

Russell: You know, obsequious?

The GRAND ROYAL INTERVIEW

by Russell Simins and Mike Diamond.

Illustrations by Ben Pjörn
Photos Tamra Yasoo
and Jenna Felling



Al: No. Kinda snooty?

Mike & Russell: No.

Mike: Kind of overly, pretentiously...nice.

Russell: A yes-man.

Mike: A yes-man is obsequious.

Russell: Like in *The Compleat Al* video, when you go to visit Michael Jackson...

Mike: That's genius (Al laughs).

Russell: You go visit him, and you're begging him. Do you do that with everybody?

Al: Beg and plead? I'm pretty good at groveling. But, ah, I don't do that all the time. I mean. Most of the time when I approach an artist, or my manager approaches an artist, at this point, they usually take it as a compliment, like, as a sign that they've reached a certain level in the pop community.

Russell: Did you meet Michael Jackson before you did that, or did you just talk to him, or have someone talk to him?

Al: Not before, that was all done over the phone when we were getting permission. But I've met him a few times since then. And he's been very nice, he, ah—

Russell: —He likes the videos?

Al: —He got the joke, yeah, and he likes the videos, and, ah, he's been a fan, which has helped a lot.

Mike: Any plans to return to any of his material?

Al: I've kind of decided not to at this point. Just because, for one thing, I've done him twice already, and that's becoming kind of an albatross around my neck that people think of me as the guy that does the Michael Jackson parody.

Mike: Exactly.

Al: Plus, I mean, it would be kind of difficult to do a Michael Jackson parody without making reference to, ah, recent events in his life—

Mike: Yyy...(laughs)

Al: —and I really don't want to do that.

Russell: So you *like* all the stuff you parody? I mean...

Al: Well...you know. I wouldn't say that. I tend to pick songs I like to parody because I know that I'm gonna be living with them for a long period of time. I can't say that I'm a big fan of

Milli Vanilli, Tiffany, or New Kids On The Block, but, they just, I kinda just have to ride what's currently popular.

Russell: Tiffany's "I Think I'm a Clone Now," right?

Al: Right.

Mike: But, you're a big fan of music. I've talked to people who have seen you at shows fairly often, in the area and all.

Al: Sure.

Mike: Like, someone mentioned to me you were at the REM show?

Al: Yeah. Big REM fan.

Mike: Cool. And then also, I have a friend whose friends with Liz Phair.

Al: Uh huh—I got to meet her at the show!

Mike: Yeah, you got to meet her. So how was that?

Al: That was great, I love Liz Phair too. That was really...that was a kick.

Mike: So no big Liz Phair plans in the future?

Al: I don't know. I was considering using her in the—

Russell:—Yo, we're talking about marriage.

(Mike and Russell crack up)

Al: Oh, *that* kind of plans. I don't know, is she available? I heard she was actually married.

Mike: Oh yeah, she did get married.

Al: So that kinda killed it for me. 'Cause, you know. But let me know if things aren't working out, and I'll look into it.

Russell: What do you think of Debbie Gibson teaming up with the Circle Jerks?

Al (guffaws): I didn't hear about that. What's she doing?

Russell: She did some show at CBGB's with them—

Al:—That's very cool.

Mike (to waitress): Can we order some food? I'll have the angel hair with tomato. Ah, pompadour, as you might like to call it.

Russell: —She stage dove, and was in the *Post*. The picture—

Mike: —Al, do you want to angel hair?

Al: Yeah, please.

Mike: That has no meat, right?

Waitress: No.

Al: Oh, that's very cool. My opinion of her just...

Mike: Russell?

Russell: Uhhh, I'm just gonna have...this is fine.

Mike: Do you have a small mixed salad?

Waitress: The muscudin salad. It has balsamic vinaigrette on it.

Mike: Okay, yeah, I'll have that as well.

Russell: We saw, I saw, the billboard for *Bad Hair Day* yesterday. You got the Coolio hair. Did you talk to Coolio at all?

Al: Well, let me tell you the whole story there. This has been a very controversial thing. And I haven't really talked about this yet with anybody.

Mike: (coughs).

Russell: Okay, great.

Al: But. What happened was. I was under the impression Coolio was fine with the song. I went to my record company late last year and said, 'I want to do a parody of "Gangsta's Paradise." And, so, do you guys have any kind of connections with Coolio?' And so it turns out, a couple of people from the record company were going to a party that Coolio was going to be at. They told me after the party, they had talked to him about it and he was fine with the whole idea. So based on that, I started recording a song. In the middle of production, I hear that Coolio's management is not thrilled with the whole idea. But my record company is saying, 'well, Coolio's fine with it, so we'll iron things out.'

Russell: They're not thrilled about the actual idea, or the fact that you're just doing a parody of it all?

Al: Both. Well, I think mostly, that I was doing a parody. But I was told that Coolio was still fine with it, and that my record company would still iron it out, and not to worry about it. And then I did the American Music Awards with him, I co-presented with him, me with the Coolio-type hair. And Coolio was great, he was terrific sport, and we got along great. And I figured, you know, everything's going to work out. And then, the night of the Grammy® Awards, Coolio wins for Best Rap album. And...

Russell: Good choice.

(Mike and Russell laugh).

Al: And, backstage, a reporter asks him, you know, so what do you think of this new "Weird Al" parody, "Amish Paradise"? And

Coolio just kinda goes off on him, and says I didn't approve it, I didn't sanction that, I didn't appreciate him desecrating my song like that. He...

Russell: Went off.

Al: And that was the first that I had heard of it, 'cause I was completely under the impression that Coolio was fine with it. I don't mind that manager's don't like it. Because, you know—

Russell: They're managers.

Al: I'm used to managers getting in the way, and being over-protective, and not really representing their client. I've had more than one occasion where a manager says "Oh, my client would never be interested in this" and then I talk to the artist and they go "Oh, I'd love it!" I've since written Coolio a very humble and sincere letter of apology and explained everything from my perspective.

Russell: And, did he respond?

Al: No, no, and don't really expect him to. But I hope he cools down a little bit, 'cause that's really sad that that happened.

Russell: So, is your life at risk?

Al: (laughs)

Mike: How about your relationship with LV, though? Now that's a whole different matter. I heard you guys are pretty...

Al: I was trying to get him in the video, but I guess that didn't happen.

Russell: Anyway, so what are your fans like? What kinda people come to your shows.

Al: It's mostly middle-aged, Japanese women. I don't know what it is about that demographic (titters).

Russell: Is it really?

Mike: Like, no matter where you play.

Russell: Is it always middle-aged Japanese wo—

Russell: What kind of venues do you do, you know, how big? The Garden, Madison Square Garden?

Al (laughing): Well. Ohh.

Mike: Astrodome?

Al: Actually, I was offered to open for Duran Duran at Madison Square Garden, like back in '84, '85—

Russell—you WERE?

Mike: No Way.

Al: —yeah,

Russell: Oh MAN.

Al: —and I turned it down. Because I had some other previous engagement.

Russell: See, those guys *do* have good taste. I've always loved Duran Duran.

Al: That would have been kind of, fun, except I would've been pelted by 12-year-old girls. That would've been too traumatic for me.

Mike: Has there been a lot of moshing at your shows lately, has that been a problem?

Al: Actually, there is moshing sometimes when I do the Nirvana takeoff. Kinda bizarre.

Russell: When you do that, you don't dress up...

Al: Actually, we do, yeah.

Russell: So you do the whole, full-on wardrobe change.

Al: The live shows are pretty theatrical, we do a lot of costume changes.

Russell: When's your next show?

Al: We start touring the end of May. I don't know when we play LA next, sometime this summer I guess.

Russell: Do you do "Living With A Hernia" live?

Al: We used to. We don't do that any more.

Mike: Aww, you gotta bring that back. Come on!

Russell: Will you start doing it? You don't know, James Brown

Mike: Did they approach you like that? Did they ask, 'How would you like to be on a game show with James Brown and Little Richard?'

Al: Yeah.

Mike: They just came to you with it already thought out.

Al: Yeah. Actually. They were two of the people, actually they mentioned several people, and those were two of them, and it wound up we were all on the same show, which was great. During the taping of the show, I remember looking over and seeing James Brown buying a vowel, and thinking, "Wow, this is amazing!"

Russell: Of course.

Al: But, when James Brown first came on the set, he was late, everybody else had kinda gone through the rehearsals. And James came through with his whole entourage after we were already in the green room. And they said, "well, James, we kinda wanna run you through the show a little bit, and make sure you're familiar, and make sure you know how to play the game." So they put him in front of the podium, and they spin the wheel, and James goes, "Ah, gimme aaaaa....gimme.... aaaaaa...uhhhmmmm..." And they go, "You have to hurry James, this is a show." (Russell begins laughing) "Gimme, a, Gimme a A!" And they go, "No James, when you spin the wheel, you have to pick a consonant." And he goes, "Oh, Okay...Europe!"

Russell: Europe, (laughing) yeah, yeah, he said that.

Mike: That was *on the air*?

Al: Yeah. I don't think it was, it was in the rehearsal.

Mike: Oh my god.

Russell: Wasn't he like... kept picking the same letters.

AT THIS INSTANT, SPIKE MAKES HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE OTHERWISE DESERTED TEA ROOM SECTION OF THE RESTAURANT. DRESSED IN A CONSERVATIVE SUIT, TIE, MATT SHARP "RENTALS" SERIES EYEGLASSES, AND A NECK BRACE, SPIKE APPEARS TO HAVE STEPPED RIGHT OUT OF A LARRY PARKER COMMERCIAL. HE TAKES THE GROUP OF MIKE, AL AND RUSSELL BY SURPRISE.

Spike: —Excuse me, Mr. Yankovich?

Al: Yeah.

Spike: Oh HI! How are you?

Al: Good, how you doing?

Spike: Good, good. I just walked by and noticed you here. Good to meet you.

Al: Very nice to meet you.

Spike: My name's Tamara Yasoo. It's, a, I just noticed you, I'm sorry to intrude.

Al: No, not at all.

Spike: I see you're having drinks. Uhm, well, good, good work.

Al: Well thank you very much.

Spike: I appreciate all your work, you know. It's really funny.

Al: Thank you.

Spike: It's really really good.

Al: Thank you.

Spike: But, ah, (dramatic increase in volume) I'll let you get back to it.

Al: Okay. Take care. (pause until Spike has left hearing range). *That's* my core audience, right there (laughter).

Russell: Oh yeah, that's your core audience? (laughing) Damn, what happened to him?

Mike: Most of your audience has neck braces or physical injuries?

Al (laughing delightedly): I don't know why that is. From too much head banging.

Russell: Do you have a lot of people with neck braces at your shows?

Al: Yeah, there's a lot of head banging at the shows. You know.

is where it's at now. His wife just died. I mean. That's the ONE.

Mike: "Living With A Hernia," honestly, that video, I'd have to say I'm a big fan.

Al: Oh thanks. I used to do it with the whole, the fake teeth and the wig and the cape, the whole bit.

Russell: Oh man. See. Now those moves, I mean...that's hard shit to learn.

(Al laughs)

Mike: Did you ever have any contact with, ah, James Brown?

Al: We're on the same record label, actually, Scotti Brothers.

Mike: Wow.

Russell: You did *Wheel of Fortune* with him.

Al: That's *right!* Yeah.

Russell: Little Richard was on there too.

Mike: Okay, I need to hear about, slow down, 'cause I'm...so you're on the same label with James. So you're able, do actually have contact with him?

Al: I don't see him that much, I've run into him a couple of times. The last time was *Wheel of Fortune*. I gotta tell the *Wheel of Fortune* story.

Russell: Go go go go! Just tell it!

Al: That was the main reason I decided to do *Wheel of Fortune*. 'Cause I figured, aaah, I don't want to be on a game show. But it was like, to be on *Wheel of Fortune* with James Brown and Little Richard, how surrealistic is that, you know?

Russell: How did they come up with the three of you? (long pause) Some *genius*....

(laughter)



Al (laughing): Yeah. No, you already said R, James."

Russell: So wait, so he's seen the "Living With a Hernia" video?

Al: I would have to assume so. Although...

Russell: You guys didn't talk about it, though.

Al: No, I ran into him after the video was out, and basically just said Hi to him. I didn't want to go, "So what'd ya think? What'd ya think?"

Russell: Are they all, like the list of hernias instead of the states and cities...(laughs) that's so genius, Al. I mean, I don't wanna fawn, but that's the shit. It's a really really funny video. Really, really funny.

Al: Thank you.

Russell: Also, as far as James Brown goes. I read part of that in that *Ben is Dead* article.

Al: Oh, you read that story. Yeah.

Russell: Now, those girls...I mean...

Mike: Well, they're nice girls. I don't want to create...

Russell: All due credit to *Ben is Dead*, they're friends of ours, but, I mean, you *sung* them "Rock and Roll Hootchie Coo" for them, and they didn't think you were singing it right.

(Al explodes laughing)

Mike: I know, we couldn't believe it. They didn't know who Rick Derringer was.

Russell: And they actually said to you, "are you singing it right?"

(Al still laughing) So what's up with that? You didn't leave at that moment?

Al (winding down laughter): Ahh, I give 'em the benefit of the

doubt. Maybe they weren't listening to the radio that summer or something.

Russell: I mean, come on. "Rock and Roll Hootchie Coo."

Mike: I mean, yeah.

Russell: So, have you ever met Dan Hartman?

Al: Yeah, did he die recently?

Russell: He *died*?

Al: No, I shouldn't even say that, maybe I'm confusing him...

Mike: No, he did.

Russell: Dan Hartman died recently?

Mike [to waitress]: Yeah. Do you have any, ah, fresh pepper?

Russell: As far as I know, didn't he...

Mike: Dan Hartman wrote Living with, ah, "Living in America."

Russell: Yeah, that's the thing. He wrote "Living in America," and he did "Instant Replay." But didn't he dress up a lot in women's clothing and stuff...or should we not talk about that?

Al: I'm not sure if I ever met him or not, and I certainly don't know that about him.

Russell: Okay, okay. He's always kind of an interesting figure on the pop music scene. (pause as Al's salad is peppered) Do you watch MTV all the time?

Al: Yes I do (chuckles). It's like wallpaper, yeah. It's a little frustrating when they go through their hour stretches where they don't play any videos at all.

Mike: I know, haven't you found that it's weird, that increasingly MTV is no longer about even about playing music videos, it's about this (pause) programming they do.

Al: Some of the programming I actually like a lot, but I prefer to having a channel that plays music videos. I hear they're splitting off to like, MTV2 or something?



Al: Yeah, they're are having an alternative, kind of more alternative, kind of station...do you like *Beavis and Butthead*?

Russell: (mouth full) Uhm, actually, I do. It's kind of a guilty pleasure, and I don't like to admit that I like them, but I actually do. Russell: Why?

Al: Well (laughs), because, I mean, it's like one of those things it's so stupid it's funny... but, you know...

Russell: Well come on, isn't that what *you're* all about?

Al: It's true. I was actually talking to Mike Judge about the possibility of having *Beavis and Butthead*...(swallows food)...on the album.

Russell: That's what I was getting to.

Al: I was definitely considering having them do a prank phone call in the middle of my song "Phony Calls." And Mike was just too crazed, he's in the middle of doing the *Beavis and Butthead* movie. Luckily we were about to get *The Simpsons* cleared, which, I never thought we would, 'cause that's another major franchise.

Russell: Did you, on the, is it "Alternative Polka," is that the one you have on the new record?

Al: (quietly) Yeah.

Russell: You have one of those on every record, right?

Al: Just about.

Russell: But you have, now, "Loser" is on the "Alternative Polka," right?

Al: (chewing) Mmm-hmm.

Russell: I mean, every record seems to have polka *something*.

The original one was "Polkas on 45."

Al: Right.

Russell: Now it's "Alternative Polka." Then there was "The Rolling Stones Polka."

Al: And, on the previous album, I did "Bohemian Polka" which was one song, in a polka style. Yeah, I really try and have a concept with the polkas, but I don't know if it really even needs one.

Russell: Do you, ah, do people send you lots of suggestions?

Al: Well, they *try* to. But I really discourage that, on a number of levels because I've got more than enough warped ideas on my own. Plus, there's always the chance that somebody will send an idea that I already thought of, and they'll think, 'Hey, I gave Al that idea, he stole it from me.'

Russell: I heard yesterday for the first time that you did "Gump/Lump," and, ah, I thought of that idea.

Al (through a mouthful of food): You see! You see! And a lot of ideas are fairly obvious, and there's only so many parody concepts out there, so.

Russell: Now, Frankie Yankovic, I know is not your dad, it just so happens that your name is Yankovic, and, your father's name was what, Nick? So how did the accordion thing happen for you?

Al: I think, partly because of Frankie Yankovic. People associated our surname with polka music. And my parents had a lot of his old 78 rpm records in the garage. And I guess they figured there should be at least one more accordion-playing Yankovic in the world...Hello!

Jenna: Hi.

Russell: This is my girlfriend Jenna, she's—

Al: —Hey Jenna, how are you? Al—



Russell: —also a huge fan of yours.

Jenna: Good to meet you. That's what I told him, when I was in the fourth or fifth grade.

Russell: She discovered you on the *Doctor Demento* show. She was a freaky little kid.

(Al laughs)

Jenna: Yes I was...Sorry, was I... I'm curious.

Russell: She wants to listen in. Anyway, uh...

Al: And my parents wanted me to be really popular with the girls in high school so they thought I should take accordion lessons. Russell: Okay, so what happened? Did you get the girls?

Al: Hasn't worked yet.

Russell: Well, you gotta use a bigger accordion.

Al: That's true. I wasn't thinkin'.

Russell: You use a smaller accordion, you don't use the big...

Al: No, because, you know, the real adult size accordions are pretty big.

Mike: They're pretty difficult to play as well.

Al: Yeah. They're hard to jump around with on stage, so I stay with the mid-sized, or "children's" version. Actually, I just got a MIDI-accordion. Which I'll be using on the road this year.

Mike: But now, if you use the MIDI-accordion, do you still rock the lederhosen?

Al: We haven't used lederhosen on stage for a while. We actually wore it on stage during the "Polka Party" tour. But that stuff is...you know, not that comfortable.

Russell: But the band is actually a pretty great polka band. I mean, the band you have, you guys rock.

THE CONVERSATION IS INTERRUPTED ONCE AGAIN BY SPIKE, WHO HAS RETURNED CLUTCHING A T4 "IDIOT" CAMERA. HE ARRANGES A GROUP POSE OF AL, MIKE AND RUSSELL IN FRONT OF A BRIGHTLY LIT WINDOW.

Mike: Also, the lederhosen are pretty great polka dress. You shouldn't be abandoning it. I mean, I know it might be a little bit uncomfortable, but think of it in the long haul.

Russell: That's the thing, you gotta bring back the lederhosen and you gotta bring back the James Brown. *Please*. Do you do the video on stage, kinda thing. Do you do the thing in the classroom where you show all the different hernias and stuff?

Al: Ahh, we didn't...was that...for James Brown, we...let's see...the whole band was dressed in tuxedos. See, what we do on stage, when you have a production number like that, we'll show a clip on the big screen for like a minute, minute and half, while we do a quick change. Then we come back out, then we'll we'll have...hey!

Spike: Oh, sorry to bother you again. I just got my brother's camera.

Al: Is it, okay.

Spike: I'm sorry to intrude, thank you very much. Can you move there? (Al bursts into laughter).

Russell: Is your neck okay? What happened to your neck, actually?

Spike: I, I...

Russell: What's your name again?

Spike: My name's Tamara, Yasoo.

(Mike lets out a gasping sound)

Russell: Hey, Russell. What happened to you neck?

Spike: My dad's boat. I fell off of it.

Al: Were you in the water at the time?

Mike: Starboard...or, the, ah, the other side?

Jenna: Port.

(a group photo is organized)

Mike: Just look through the thing and take the picture, right?

Russell: Let me get in here, too...(camera focuses and clicks)...The flash didn't go off.

Mike: Let's get one of Mr. Yasoo here.

Spike: Oh, great. Thank you.

Al: Thanks for being obsequious.

Spike: What?

Al: Thanks for being obsequious.

Spike: Oh, thank you (Russell and Al laugh).

Mike: Could you take a picture of all of us?

Spike: Okay. Oh, wait, ah, it's not working (several shots are fired off). Are you ready?

Al: Could you take a picture of me and Jenna?

Russell: Yeah, there you go (more chuckling).

Spike: I can get these processed, are you guys staying here, I'll drop them off?

Al: No, you guys aren't here either are you? Or are you?

Russell: I'm here.

Spike: Oh, Russell? I'll drop them off at your front counter.

Russell: That's great.

Spike: (pause) What's your room number? (everyone balks, laughing)

Russell: I'm, my room's at the pool.

Mike: You can just leave them, he's got a tent by the pool.

Spike: Okay, okay. I'll talk to you guys later.

Al: Forgot what I was talking about...

Jenna: Do you *know* him?

Al: We go way back.

Russell: Hold on, is he taking more pictures? I hope he doesn't hurt himself. (pause) Alright, so tell us about the show. Because I've never seen a live AI show. You were saying...?

Al: So we show some kind of clip on a big screen, while we do a quick change. For example, when we do James Brown, the whole band would change into tuxedos. And I would change into the, the James Brown...

Russell: Do you do the hair thing too?

Al: Yeah, we do wigs, the whole bit.

Russell: So those are all just wigs, even the "Ricky" thing?

Al: Ricky was a wig, yeah. I mean, sometimes it's my real hair. Like, ah, "Bedrock Anthem," with the dreadlocks, that was my real hair. For the Crash Test Dummies...

Russell: We gotta get to "Bedrock Anthem," 'cause that's another one that just blows me away.

Al: Even when we do the "Fat" video, when I have the whole latex makeup, and a chin piece, and the whole fat suit. We try to make the live shows as theatrical as we can. Sometimes we have the videos playing in synch with the band playing.

Russell: So when we come to see the shows, you're going to be doing "Fat" live, and you're going to be all fat?

Al: Mmm hmm.

Mike: Wow.

Russell: Oh man, that's the greatest show on earth!

Mike: See, you say that lederhosen are uncomfortable? (laughter) What about the fat suit!

Russell: Lederhosen just don't turn on the girls as much, I guess.

Mike: Do you ever rock the lederhosen just in a social setting? For a lunch, or a date or something?

Al: No, I haven't. But that's actually, you know, polka wear, I think is gonna really come back as a look this year.

Mike: I'm telling you, this summer, 9-6, mark my words.

Al: I'm gonna rock the lederhosen.

Russell: So what's up with the Hawaiian shirts?

Al: Uhm, I'm not really sure how that started. I just happen to wear them a lot in my own personal life, and then on one tour, that was, on the contract rider, my manager asked for one gaudy-looking Hawaiian shirt for every show that I did. That was my version of no-brown-M&Ms. And I just wound up with a whole closet full of Hawaiian shirts.

Russell: So, speaking of closets full of stuff, I saw the *Lifestyles of the Rich & Famous* episode that you were on with Robin Leach. And it's the only time I've...no one else has seen it, except for her, we saw it together.

Mike: Is that how you guys got together?

Russell: Yeah, we actually consummated over that show. Now, you got your Vans on right now.

Al: Mmm hmm.

Russell: There was a *closet* full of Vans.

Al: The shoe closet.

Russell: Now first, tell us a little bit about your encounter with Robin Leach. What was that like?

Al: Uh, it was a brief encounter. Most of the interview, well, actually it was with someone else. It was one of those things where somebody else does the interview and Robin shows up two weeks after the interview and say 'We talked to Al...'

Russell: So he's not really there? He's not as much on the scene as it seems?

Al: Not as much, no.

Russell: So, if I remember correctly, you were just going off about all your shoes. I wish I could see...could we get a copy of that? I would love to get a copy of that. Do you know anyone who has a copy of that?

Al: I, I...

Russell: You don't care, but that's like...

Al: No, I probably have a VHS copy somewhere. But, ah...

Russell: No, it was just really funny. I'm a very big fan of that show, anyway.

Mike: But how was it hosting Robin Leach for the brief moment that you did?

Al: He seemed like a cool guy. We talked about Zsa Zsa Gabor,

because I was at Zsa Zsa Gabor's house for the shoot, and she was a bit upset because the camera crew was late or something, and she had broken one of her own vases and she was trying to blame it on the camera crew. Some kind of insanity going on there.

Russell: Some kind of insanity going on at Zsa Zsa Gabor's house?

Al: Imagine that.

Russell: Let's finish with your wardrobe here, 'cause I know all the girls out there are crazy to know about this. Now, you always wear the pants.

Al (laughs): When I'm public, yeah.

Russell: No, (laughing), but these kind of pants. They're sort of tight, a little bit tight. And then you always have the Vans on, and the crazy socks.

Al: They're just kind of generic pants, I mean, they're just jeans.

Russell: Yeah, okay. Generic jeans.

Al: I'm wearing kinda the crazy socks today, these I got in Berkeley, the tie-dye vibe.

Russell: Can we get a picture of that...where's our photographer (Mike laughs)...he's gone.

Jenna: I have one.

Russell: Can we get a picture of Al showing us his sock. Do you mind?

Al: No.

Russell: Yeah, she's got a camera.

Jenna: Color.

(pause as Jenna focuses on Al, contorting like a yoga master to show off his socks)

Russell: Hurry up!

Jenna: Hold on, it's hard.

Russell: You ever wear any of the new Vans?

Al: Well, every couple of years I just go down to the warehouse and say 'Hey Steve [Van Doren], I need some more shoes...'

And get the wheelbarrow, and like (laughs) get a couple more.

Mike: Do you use their fabric, or do you get them custom made?

Al: No. I know you can do that. But every pair of Vans I have is off the rack. We put made some sequin versions of them for "The Compleat Al" a few years ago, they had some kind of gag shot where they show the shoes...

Russell: Tinfoil.

Al: Yeah. But yeah, most of them are just straight off the rack.

Russell: What's...what do you think of Billy Corgan... (long pause as Al bites into a piece of bread) now that he's bald.

Al (laughing): I think Billy's pretty cool, actually.

Russell: Did you ever want to do anything of his?

Al: Well, actually that's a good example of—

Russell: —Uh oh.

SPIKE INTERRUPTS AGAIN, THIS TIME FOR AN AUTOGRAPH AND MORE EXTREMELY NERVOUS CONVERSATION, WHICH HE IS UNABLE TO COMPLETE...

H TAMARA
YASOO
We're Al
Zsa Zsa

Spike: My brother said I should get your autograph while you're here.

Al: Okay. For your brother?

Spike: No, for me, actually.

Al: Do you do everything your brother tells you to do?

Spike: Oh, no. I just didn't want you to think I did it on my own.

Al: Ah, wouldn't wanna think that. How do you spell your name again.

Spike: Tamra, T-A-M-R-A.

Al: T-A-M-A-R-A?

Spike: Yeah. Yasoo. Y-A-S-O.

Al: Y-A-S-O?

Spike: Yeah. That's nice handwriting.

Al: Thanks.

Spike: Did you do that in school, too?

Al: Uhhmm, what? Write your name?

(Russell cracks up)

Russell: Write *your* name? Go Al...

Spike: I meant, in *that* handwriting?

Al: Yes, this is how I write everything. Is that correct?

Spike: It's pretty.

Al (sarcastically): *Thank you.*

Spike: I was just gonna ask you a quick question. I've watched all your videos, and, (Spike starts to laugh)...

Al: Yes, Tamara? (Spike is trying to catch his breath, laughing harder)

Russell (laughing): It's outta control now.

Spike (laughing so hard no he's moaning): Oh...

Russell (laughing): *What!* Spit it out, Tamara.

(Spike runs away from the table with tears in his eyes)

Jenna: It's so mean to laugh at him.

Mike: That was the funniest thing I've seen in, (laughing)...

(pause)

Al: Now, what were we talking about?

Russell: Billy Corgan. You never wanted to do any of their new songs, the "Zero", or...

Al: I was thinking about doing "Bullet", I was gonna do "Despite my old age, I am still making minimum wage." (everyone laughs)

Russell: See, you know what? I came up with *that* one too (laughs). I'm gonna get my lawyer on the phone...

Mike: No, actually, those were the original words that Billy wrote, and he changed the lyric (laughs).

Russell: What's your take on rap and hip-hop? Do you like all that stuff? I know you did Coolio, that's kind of a very commercial record.

Al: Yeah. I like it, but I don't know if I could...I mean, I like to mix it up with other kinds of music.

Russell: Are you into East coast or West coast rap?

Al: Hey, I don't take sides, man—we're all one community here.

Russell: Alright, Al.

Mike: What about Wu Tang Clan? Have you ever thought of, ah, collaborating?

Russell: 'Cause if Coolio's after you, and you fuck around with the Wu Tang Clan, that'll get *really* serious (laughter).

Mike: Wu Tang Clan ain't nothing to fuck with.

Russell: Wu Tang Clan would do more than threaten you.

Al: Thanks for the warning.

Russell: We've already asked you if you're obsequious, right?

Al: Yes.

Russell: And you said...

Al: I, I, did I give you answer to that one? Am I obsequious? I am rarely obsequious.

Russell: Okay. You were just very obsequious in the Michael Jackson, that moment. That was cool, I understand. If I was in front of Michael Jackson...I really love when the monkey hits you in the face.

Al: That was a high point in my life, too.

Russell: So did you ever hang out with Joan Jett, or was that also just like, business?

Al: I've never really hung out with her. I've met her like once or twice, briefly, at some award show.

Russell: Just 'cause I met her, and I jammed with her once, and

she was great. She's great, she's really funny. She smoked a lot of pot (Al laughs) which we probably shouldn't talk about, but it is *Grand Royal*, after all. We incriminate everybody in this magazine. Let's talk about some old stuff. We wanna talk about Wendy Carlos.

Mike: Yeah. "Peter And The Wolf". 'Cause we're also doing a thing in this issue on the Moog, and on some of the great Moog players. And we're interested to know how that collaboration came to be, and...

Al: That was '87, or '88, something like that. It was while ago. That was basically CBS Masterworks, which is the classical division at CBS. They put us together, they wanted me to do "Peter And The Wolf", and they thought Wendy would be a good match. They wanted to do really all sorts of far out things that they thought a more standard, traditional kind of conductor-slash-composer wouldn't be interested in. Wendy was great. She had a terrific sense of humor, and obviously, ah, was just an amazing synthesizer player.

Russell: Did you talk to at all about her about her life?

Al: Not too much. I mean, it was just...I didn't want to go there, you know?

Russell: I understand.

Mike: Yeah, but he's played on so many great records too, as a session player.

Al: Yeah.

Mike: Did you ask her about that?

Al: Mmmm. We didn't talk much about that. I was a fan of hers back when she was Walter. In fact, I think she had all her old gold records changed, she had the plaques changed from Walter to Wendy.

Mike: Really?

Al: Did she do *Clockwork Orange*? I think she worked with Kubrick a lot.

Russell: Yeah, she worked with Kubrick—

ACROSS THE ROOM, YOKO ONO GLIDES BY LOOKING MAJESTIC AND ALOOF. AT FIRST AL MERELY GLANCES IN THAT DIRECTION, ASSUMING IT'S MERELY A WOMAN WHO BEARS A PASSING RESEMBLANCE TO THE LEGENDARY SINGER. AFTER A MARTY FELDMAN-ESQUE EYE-POPPING DOUBLETAKE,



AL REALIZES IT IS YOKO. YOU CAN HEAR THE SOUND OF BOTH OF AL'S KNEES BANGING THE TABLE AS HE LEAPS UP TO OFFER HIS HAND TO HER AND INTRODUCES HIMSELF IN A VOICE THAT HAS RISEN BY SEVERAL OCTAVES...

[UNBEKNOWNST TO AL, RUSSELL HAS ARRANGED FOR YOKO ONO AND SEAN LENNON TO PASS BY THE TABLE AT THE EXACT MOMENT THAT AL EXPLAINS HIS ATTEMPTS TO PARODY THE BEATLES. THE PLAN WAS TO SEE HOW COOLY AL REACTED WHEN THINGS REALLY GOT WEIRD. THE INSTANT AFTER THE SUBJECT OF KUBRICK COMES UP, RUSSELL SIGHTS SEAN LENNON MAKING HIS WAY TOWARD THEM, AND KNOWS YOKO CAN'T BE FAR BEHIND. RUSSELL GIVES SEAN THE SUBTLE NOD WHILE NOT-SO-SUBTLY STEERING THE CONVERSATION TO THE BEATLES. KEEP IN MIND ALL OF THIS HAPPENS IN AN INSTANT.]

—Oh! "Free As A Bird", actually. Did you want to do "Free As A Bird"?

Al: Yes I did. (astounded pause) Did anybody tell you about this? You're just guessing?

Russell: What happened?

Al: I figured we'd have a good shot at it, because I knew that Paul McCartney actually liked me. Like, 1984 I met Paul McCartney and he was, "So when you gonna do one of my songs?" so I kept that in the back of my mind, and years later when Guns-n-Roses had a hit with "Live And Let Die" I called Paul and said I wanted to do a parody called "Chicken Pot Pie". And Paul said, "well, if there's anything else, I'd love for you to do it, but Linda and I are such vegetarians that we don't want to condone the eating of animal flesh."

Mike: Is this before...

Russell (casually): Hey, isn't that Yoko Ono over there? Speaking of "Free As A Bird."

Jenna: Hi.

Yoko: How are you?

Mike: Yoko.

Russell: Yoko, hey.

Al: Pleasure to meet you, Al Yankovic.

(something muttered, Yoko keeps moving toward the pool outside)

Al (astonished): Did you know that when you were asking me that question? (laughing, trying to compose himself)

Okay, okay, okay...

Russell: Hey look, it's Sean Lennon! (laughter).

Sean: Hey!

Al: (laughing in disbelief, offers his hand): Sean, how are you?

Sean: Good, good to see you.

Al: Pleasure.

Sean: What's up.

Al: We're just—

Sean: —I was going to the Crystal Ball room.

Al: Okay.

Mike: Have a good time over there.

Russell: Alright, see you guys later. (laughter) I feel sort of...I freaked out Al Yankovic; I can die now. (laughter).

Uhm, should we spill the beans?

Mike: About how you knew about "Free As A Bird"?

Russell: Yeah. Well, actually, I'm touring with Yoko Ono.

Al: Oh really.

Russell: Yeah, I'm playing drums with them.

Al: Oh, I didn't know that. So tell me what she said.

Russell: I liked the way you go like this (does something which starts them laughing again).

Al: So what did she say, what did she say?

Russell: Nothing, I just, was guessing. No really, they just mentioned that you wanted to do "Free As A Bird".

Al: Yeah, "Gee I'm A Nerd" or whatever.

Russell: Yeah, but they didn't want to do it (laughing). He's still coming down from that one.

Al (laughing) I was thinking, yeah she does kinda look like...IT IS HER! (Russell, laughing and clapping) Ahhh, that was too...yeah, you definitely freaked me out there.

Russell: So, ah.

Al: That one didn't make it to the album.

Russell: That was a great idea. So go ahead, keep telling us the story.

Al: Well, there's not that much more to it. I mean—

Russell: —Now wait, isn't that *John Lennon*?

(everyone bursts into laughter. Al laughs so long and hard, he starts choking)

Mike: Does anyone here know how to practice the Heimlich maneuver?

Russell: There's a thing, on, we can talk about Doctor Demento, and he was one of your heroes and you sent him old tapes and stuff. Was the "My Bologna" first version of that, was that actually done in a bathroom?

Al: Yeah, the very first version of that was done across the hall from my campus radio station. I did the "Weird Al" show on KCPR.

Russell: Which is where you got the name, right?

Al: Yeah. It was done over the summer, on the college campus. And we ran lines from the production room, across the hall, into the bathroom of the graphic arts building. Because they had very nice, warm, reverb sound in there. And, ah, put up a microphone, sat down in a chair with my accordion, and did "My Bologna". That was what started it all.

Russell: There you go, there you go. Do you still, is Doctor Demento still alive?

Al (defensive and embarrassed): Oh jeez! Yeah (laughs). He's still on the air every week. I don't know how many markets he's in...

Russell: No, I know I know...I was just kidding. So, now, there's also something that really got me. It was seeing Steve Cropper...I want to talk about your band a little. There's that kinda joke audition thing in your video, and then all of a sudden Steve Cropper turns up. I mean, did

you hang with Steve?

Al: Not too much before—

Russell: —'Cause those guys are some of my heroes.

Al: I forget the connection, there. I think he's either friends with Jay Levy, my manager, or more likely Rob Weiss, who co-directed *The Compleat Al*, and he's like a major Hollywood producer. Actually, I think that was it—was Steve Cropper in *The Blues Brothers*? 'Cause Bob produced *The Blues Brothers*.

Russell: Okay, so you're not friends with him or anything?

Al: Well, not *close*. But I've hung with him a little bit.

Mike: And what about Rick Derringer?

Russell: Isn't he like, slowly shrinking?

(laughter)

Al: I haven't talked Rick for a couple years.

Russell: What's up with "State of Shock's" Harvey Leads. I mean, there's actually something in the video that's funnier than what you do, and he's doing it. Who is he?

Al: He was an executive at CBS Records. CBS used to distribute all of Scotti Bros. products. He was one of our friends at the label.

Russell: You just got him to do it, because he was some executive?

Al: He was a friend of ours at the label, I mean. I forget why exactly we wanted him to do it, be we just thought it would be funny to have him singing "State of Shock". The gag was, Michael Jackson wasn't going to a video for "State Of Shock", so it was somebody at the label doing it for him. It was just basically him singing it with a cheesy drum track, and some really cheesy lighting.

Russell: It's amazingly funny. It seems like he's reading the whole thing.

Al: Hello.

Mike: Yasoo, you're back.

Spike: I got a little freaked out.

Al: Oh, that's okay. You see Yoko Ono walk by?

Spike: I did. That's was really her?

Al: Yeah.

Spike: (pause) Wow. (Al giggles). I was going to tell you, when I went upstairs I thought of a few ideas for you.

Al: You did?

Spike: Yaaa, I—

Al: —Oh, this is great! (Russell and Mike laugh)

Spike: I'm, don't...You're probably going to think this is dumb.

Al: Should we work you the deal before you tell me, because I don't want to hear a great idea, and then we can't come to a business arrangement.

Spike: Ohh, you're teasing.

Al: Okay, you can tell me the idea first.

Spike: Okay. Well, you know that new song?

Al: Yeah! Oh, I (makes slapping sounds), what, what what is that? Shoot. No. Wait.

Spike: "Dead Man Walking"?

Al: Uh huh.

Spike: I was gonna do, say you (Spike begins breathing funny) you could one (breathing harder) called....(on the verge of losing it)...it might be too silly (laughter).

Russell: That's a good one—"It Might Be too Silly."

Spike: No no no. "Bread Man Walking?"

Al: "Bread Man Walking"?

Spike: Yeah, and it's a guy...

Al: He's made out of bread?

Spike: No, he's, he's, yeah, well, he's either the Pillsbury dough guy? Or he's a loaf of bread? (Al begins giggling) And they start it out like "Bread man Walk-in" (Al starts cracking up, everyone follows)

Spike: You think it's funny?

Al: Yeah, "Bread Man Walking"? Are you kidding me—that's entertainment there.

Spike: And I was gonna say then you're handcuffed in shackles and bread suit—

Al: —In bread *soup*? What?

Spike: In a bread suit.

Al: In a bread suit. Oh, sorry. That makes more sense. In a bread suit.

Russell: I like bread soup.

Spike: And they're gonna execute you, they're gonna execute the bread.

Al: They're gonna execute the bread.

Spike: Yeah.

Al: I'm an honorary Blowfish!

Spike: Oh no. (pause) Whoa...okay, so their new song is "Truth Or Dare", and this would be really funny 'cause you could do the song, they're in a bus station playing their acoustic guitars. You could do the one called "Shoe Repair", where you're in the bus station...

Al: Repairing shoes?

Spike: Yeah. You like it? (long pause, then Al responds in almost spooky, wacky tone of voice)

Al: Love it!

Spike: Really?

Al: Shoe. Repair. That's amazing...what do you do for a living?

Spike: I'm actually doing, riding with a bike team. I'm on a bike team.

Al: I think you're wasting your talents.

Spike: Really, nooo, nooo. You can have those, those are yours, for keeps.

Al: For free?

Spike: Yeahyeahyeah.

Al: For nothing?

Spike: No, no problem.

Russell: Is your lawyer F. Lee Bailey?

Spike: Uhm. No.

Mike: F. Lee Jaily?

Spike: Will you sign my bread?

Al: I'd love to.

Spike: Okay, this is, if you ever do the "Bread Man Walking" I'll have the piece of bread that started the whole thing.

MAKING HIS FOURTH ENTRANCE IN TWENTY MINUTES, SPIKE WEIRD ENERGY IN THE AIR AT THAT TABLE...I FELT LIKE I WAS

Mike: Like burnt toast?

Al: Uh huh.

Spike: Yeah, that could be funny. (laughter) Uhm, then I had another one too.

Al: Oh, okay, alright.

Spike: Then I'll let you get back to it. These are probably too silly for you, I don't know, how silly is too silly for you?

Al: I don't think there's such a thing.

Spike: Really? Then this could be good. "Truth Or Dare" you know, the new song by Hootie and the Blowfish, it's on TV?

Al: Uh huh. You a big Hootie fan?

Spike: You like Hootie?

Al: Oh, me and Hootie, like this.

Spike: Have you met 'em?

Al: Met them?

Russell: That's kind of a hard thing to sign, there.

(Al carves into the bread with a pen)

Spike: You're a machine. (pause) What nationality is Yankovich?

Al: Japanese.

Spike: Is that true? 'Cause my father's Chinese.

Al: Here you go.

Spike: Thank you.

Al: You're welcome.

Russell: Alright, now we gotta let Al eat his food.

Spike: Oh, sorry.

Russell: Sorry, yeah.

Mike: You'll just be over in that area. (Jenna laughs)

Spike: I'm, I'm gonna go back to, uh, to my room. But hopefully I will see you guys later. If you need anything, I'm listed—

a lesson in check your e-mail

Nil

Communication:

Illustrations: Ben Pjörn



Yasoo.

Al: Okay. Thanks Yasoo.

Russell: We'll be sure to call you.

Spike: I have those photos of you too. Can I please take another photo of you guys...

Al: Suuuure.

(laughter and focusing noises)

Al: Mmmm.

Russell: Anyway (laughter).

Mike: I have a question, Al. This might be personal, but, as we're coming off this disturbance, so it might be good...now, with your hair...you're talking about all these different outfits on tour. Have you ever considered going with the process, like Barry White? You know, 'cause right now, I'd have to say it's kinda jehri curl lite, in appearance.

Al: I'm for the natural look. A lot of people think this is a bad perm, but it's actually just bad hair.

Mike: Yeah.

Al: It's the way it really is. I was dating a girl for a while who wanted me to cut the sides of my hair really short, and then I luckily for me I read your last issue, and I realized she wanted to mulletize me. And (Jenna gasps) I cut that in the bud, nipped that in the bud.

Russell: What do you put in your hair?

Al: Water, usually (laughter). Water helps. Actually, I use a little macadamia nut oil now. That's supposed to be good for it.

Mike: That's good, that's natural.

Russell: I use coconut oil, just a little bit.

Mike: Russell also uses coconut lotion.

Mike: Speaking of videos. We're friends with this guy

Spike Jonze—

Al: —Oh! Love Spike Jonze. Yeah.

Mike: And he just wanted to forward to you that he's a big fan of your work.

Al: Are you serious?

Mike: Yeah.

Al: Oh man that is so cool.

Russell: He's a huge fan.

Mike: He just wanted to tell you that. 'Cause we work on our ideas with him.

Al: He's brilliant. He's doing a feature now?

Mike: Yeah.

Al: What's that about?

Mike: It's called "Harold and the Purple Crayon." It's based on, have you ever heard of that children's book? I don't know if you're familiar with that...but anyway, it's part animation, part real action.

Al: Oh. Looking forward to that.

Russell: Also, if you've ever wanted to do a Blues Explosion video...have you heard the Blues Explosion album? Alright, well, someday you might.

Mike: We can send you the Blues Explosion stuff.

Russell: Yeah, well send you the Blues Explosion stuff. That's the main band I'm in.

Al: (slyly) I know you got the flavor.

Mike and Russell: Ahhhhhh.

Russell: He's on it.

Mike: Why wasn't there a Weird Al, in the flavor video?

prove myself there.

Russell: Well, there's this band called Butter coming out soon, which is a band that I'm in, with the girls from Cibo Mato, you ever heard of that band? Anyway, we're gonna come out on Grand Royal so maybe we'll hit you up to direct our video.

Al: Oh, I'd love that.

Russell: WOW. (pause) But you have to be in it. (laughter) Dressed as James Brown. It's good to know you're available, and that you're into it. That's pretty exciting.

Al: I probably wouldn't be available until after I got off the road, though...

Russell: No no no. I know. I know.

Mike: Yeah, Russell, we don't need to make any concrete plans (laughter).

Russell: I know it's a limited agreement.

Mike: Russell doesn't want to mean any disrespect to James Brown, but I have to say, Russell is the hardest working man in show business right now. Playing with Yoko Ono and the Blues Explosion, and Butter... doing interviews for *Grand Royal*...

Russell: This is not work though, this is pure pleasure. (pause) Do you like Sting?

Al: Yeah. His album actually came out of the same day as mine, on Tuesday. So we're battling it out on the charts.

Russell: How do your records do, generally?

Al: Uhm (hesitantly), they average between 500,000 and a million, usually. Some sell more, some sell less.

(pause)

Mike: That's good.

Russell: That's all you need.

HAS RECOVERED FROM HIS LAUGHING FIT AND IS READY TO DO BUSINESS. "THERE WAS SUCH A THAT GUY, TAMARA. I HAD BECOME A DIFFERENT PERSON ALTOGETHER..." SPIKE SAID LATER.

Russell: Yeah, but that's personal. (pause) Well, what else. You know those Yoda pillowcases? (Jenna moans)

Al: Yeah.

Russell: Are those yours? Where'd you get those?

Al (disinterested): Where was that? Was that an album cover?

Russell: No, it's in a video. It's in "Midnight Star."

Al: Oh, that. I don't know where they got those. They just went crazy with the set design, and just found all the tacky stuff they could.

Russell: Okay, 'cause that's pretty fresh stuff.

Al: I should keep better track, you know, when you do a video, the props just kinda disappear afterwards.

Mike: Yeah.

Russell: Especially your videos. Those props...those will be in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame one day. Let's hope so.

Russell: Well, I wanted to, what we originally wanted to do... do you direct videos? Are you directing all these videos you're doing?

Al: Yeah.

Russell: Well, I was hitting up Chris Lombardi—

Mike: —President of Matador—

Russell: —To get you to direct one of our videos. And he was all into it, but we just never got around to it.

Al: Oh, god, I'd love that. I'm trying to get that... 'cause you know, I've directed most of my own videos. I've been directing videos for Jeff Foxworthy, which is cool, I mean, he sold a lot of records.

Russell: That's the guy...

Al: "You know you're a redneck..." Yeah. But yeah, I'd love to break into the more alternative, *120 Minutes* kinda genre and

Russell: So you've been on Letterman, right?

Al (sadly): Actually, no. Letterman and *Saturday Night Live* are two of my favorite shows, and I have not been on either one.

Russell: Have you been asked, or?

Al: I don't think I'm Letterman's cup of tea. I think he thinks I'm too silly juvenile or something.

Russell: That word comes up a lot in this interview.

Al: Wacky! And zany, too.

Russell: Did you ever play CB's?

Al: No (laughter). Are they still doing punk rock there?

Russell: Yeah, all the time. But it seems like bands who used to play CBGB's can now fill up bigger clubs, just because the music is...whatever. More mainstream. What else...(pause) What about Kurt? Did you ever talk to Kurt Cobain?

Al: Yeah, yeah I did. I talked to him, actually on the set of

8:43pm AL IS ANNOYED and noticeably checks his watch, in case onlookers wonder why Weird Al is sitting alone in a Hawaiian restaurant on a Saturday night.

8:45pm RUSSELL CHILLS in the lounge while Mike mixes up the carrot-beet-ginger smoothies

8:56pm AL STORMS OUT, speed-dialing his manager on the cellular.

9:01pm TRANSPIXED by America's Castles on A&E, Mike and Russell are oblivious to the fact they have just dished Al Yankovic.



8:43pm



8:45pm



8:56pm



9:01pm

Saturday Night Live. 'Cause Victoria Jackson is a friend of mine, I did *UHF* with her, and I knew that Nirvana was gonna be performing that night, so I said "look if you ever get Kurt alone somewhere, put him on the phone with me, 'cause I wanna ask him about a parody." Which she did. She called me up later in the day and said, "Uhh, Here's Kurt Cobain." And gave the phone to him. And I just said, "Hey Kurt, Hi. It's Al Yankovic. I just wanted to say I love your new album, and I was wondering if I could do a parody of 'Smells Like Teen Spirit?'" And he said something to effect of, "Well, is it gonna be about food or something?" Well, no, it's gonna be about how nobody can understand your lyrics. And he said, "Oh, well. That's funny." He was extremely cool.

Russell: That video's pretty funny. That guy with the donut—is it a donut or a bagel?

Al: Ahh, I think it's a donut.

Russell: It's soo...fresh. (pause) So now, what about the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Do you like them?

Al: Yeah, I do.

Mike: How were they about the whole...did you ever talk to them personally?

Al: Briefly.

Russell: Now that stuff came out before the *Flintstones* movie.

Al: Yes.

Russell: Which, whenever I show people my video library, I sit 'em down, I always make sure I say, 'You gotta remember, this stuff came out before the *Flintstones* movie.' Just givin' you props.

Al: Thanks. In fact, when MTV started playing the video, they said 'Well, this is from the upcoming *Flintstones* soundtrack...' Russell: See, see...

Al: Which, actually it wound up being on the *Flintstones* soundtrack, but that was...

Mike: Really? Oh, I didn't know that. So after it was already out, and you'd done the video, they came to you.

Al: Yeah, like months later they said "Hey, can we use this song in the soundtrack?" I'm like, sure...

Russell: So anyway, Red Hot Chili Peppers?

Al: Yeah. I was at the MTV awards and Anthony Keidis was sitting two chairs away from me so I leaned over to him and said, "Anthony, what do you think? Can I do a parody?" And he said, "Well, I gotta run it by the band, but ahhh, I guess so."

Russell: That's a pretty genius video.

Al: Thanks. Yeah, I had to go through hundreds of hours of *Flintstones* footage to get just the right little bits to use. And we found the exact same patch of nowhere that they shot their video on.



From the Glen E. Friedman archive; backstage, Madonna tour, circa 1985.

Russell: You found the same patch?

Al: We drove two and half hours out to Palmdale or wherever it was, and said, "I think that's the bush they had...yeah." (laughs)

Russell: How did you know even to go in that which direction? Did they tell you?

Mike: Location scouts.

Al: We talked to the original location scout.

Russell: That's really really funny. So, I saw the "Amish Paradise" video today on MTV, is it getting a lot of airplay?

Al: It seems to. It's on like three or four times a day.

Russell: Florence Henderson, that's pretty genius. How was it working with her?

Al: Oh, it was great. I mean, she was very professional, a great sense of humor. She showed up on the set, and she said she was watching the "Gangster's Paradise" video and she was getting the Michelle Pfeiffer look down. She's such a machine (laughs).

Russell: She does the Michelle Pfeiffer... (laughter)...she looks pretty good.

Al: She looks, you know...kinda like Michelle Pfeiffer, in her own Brady-like way.

Russell: Before we go, tell us some of your old favorite TV shows.

Al: Old favorites. *Police Squad* is my all time favorite.

Mike and Russell: Alright.

Al: *Twilight Zone*. *Monty Python*, *SCTV*...nothing much else comes immediately to mind. Any others that you wanna...

Russell: No, no. (pause) When's the tour gonna start?

Al: Right now it's tentatively scheduled for May 24th, we have our first gig already at Hershey Park, Pennsylvania.

Russell: Alright.

Mike: Alright.

Al: We're talkin' Amish Country. We'll get the Amish contingency going in...

Russell: You gonna be wearing the full-on Amish outfit this tour?

Al: Oh yeah. sure.

Russell: What are you gonna do about the no-mustache, though?

Al: Well, (weakly) I, I don't know yet. We'll probably just have to be an Amish with a mustache for that song.

Russell: That's a great place to do a gig.

Al: Yeah, we wind up doing a lot of amusement parks, 'cause it's kind of a family oriented show.

Russell: So that's your audience?

Mike: Do you think there'll be a lot of neck braces there? (laughter) It's safe to assume...you figure it's an amusement park—there could be. **end.** ☞

unsolved mysteries:

Russell

Disses Dick.

MONDAY: Months after the first Weird Al interview attempt, Russell and Mike are rescheduled with Al. With just four days to go, Russell has a stroke of genius, and decides it's essential for Dick Van Patten to make a cameo during the Weird Al interview. He tells Mike D, who simply nods in agreement.

TUESDAY: Grand Royal's Corporate Activities Coordinator Fritz has painstakingly located Van Patten's manger, who immediately asks "Will there be any compensation fee for Dick?" Fritz says no. "The manager sounds doubtful that he'll be available on such short notice, but says he'll "run it by Dick."

Illustrations: Ben Pjörn





AFTER GETTING JENNA TO TAKE PHOTOS OF AL GOOFING ON THE HOTEL TENNIS COURTS, MIKE AND RUSSELL RECONNOITER BACK TO RUSSELL'S ROOM TO DEBRIEF, WHERE THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE WAS WAITING ON THE HOTEL VOICE MAIL SYSTEM.

(see last issue's Russels Simins/Simmons identity controversy for context):

MESSAGE CENTER: ...one fifteen, PM.

Wesley: How you doin' Russell? This is, ah, Wesley Dalsen from Game Records. Uhm, I'm not sure if you remember me or not, Russell, but I brought you a few things down to the Four Seasons. Ahhh, my artists rap on, uhhm, uh, a lot of Southeast Cartel albums, the Havoc and Prodigy albums, ahh, I have a artist right now that's rappin' on one of the songs coming out on, uh, Ice-T's new album. They, uh, created the concept and everything and they're thinking about going with that one for the second single. And basically, I did a D.O. promo for 92.3 The Beat, with South Central Cartel featuring two of my artists. And that's on the front of the tape as well as six songs off the album "Mobile Nobel" featuring Mr. West Side, I know you're gonna like it. You can give me a call back, the number's on there. Alright Russell.

MESSAGE CENTER: End of message. To save message, press...

WEDNESDAY: Amazingly, Dick Van Patten personally calls Grand Royal to explain he has prior commitments for Thursday afternoon. Russell tells him to cancel them. After an exhaustive discussion, Dick offers to do a telephone interview on Friday at 5:00pm, the day AFTER the Al interview. Faced with no other choice, Russell agrees. FRIDAY 5:00pm: Dick Van Patten waits for Russell's phone call, but Russell is locked the Grand Royal conference room for a crucial Butter meeting. 5:32pm: Dick never receives the call.



Friday 5:00pm

Friday 5:32pm

BECK

HANSEN'S

AL CONNECTION

The World's Greatest Kakaoke Artist & The Yankovic/Hansen Correspondence.

by Peter Relic

Weird Al is the archetypal great karaoke artist, in that he pushes the disciplined art of karaoke one step further: providing his own backing track and parodic lyrics while retaining the original melody. Beck has his own karaoke fixation, as manifested in both his talkin'-blues talk-over mic style and the numerous lyrical karaoke references that appear his *Odelay* DGC release. In the following exclusive, two worlds collide.

HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEW WEIRD AL ALBUM WHERE HE DOES A RENDITION OF "LOSER"?

No. He was gonna do a full-blown "Loser" and I was sort of not down with it at the time cos he asked me like two years ago. If he asked me now I'd say go for it, but at the time I felt like I wanted that song to die like a quiet death. He wrote back a letter saying "if anyone can kill a song I can kill it." So he ended up using it in the polka. Russell Blues Explosion is a huge Yankovic fan and we watched the videos at his house. I don't think Russell will ever forgive me for not letting him do the full blown "I'm A Schmooser." I think the song is already a parody of itself, it's got inherent parody.

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT WHEN WEIRD AL DOES A SONG, IT VALIDATES THE SONG-WRITING ASPECT. LIKE IF AL CAN DO THIS TO DO, AND THE SONG STILL STANDS UP, THAT'S TESTAMENT TO A CERTAIN COMPETENCE IN THE ORIGINAL TUNESMITH.

Yeah.

I ALSO THINK OF WEIRD AL AS BEING THE ULTIMATE KARAOKE ARTIST. TAKING SONGS AND DOING HIS OWN LYRICAL INTERPRETATIONS OVER THE TRACKS. WHAT'S UP WITH YOUR KARAOKE FIXATION?

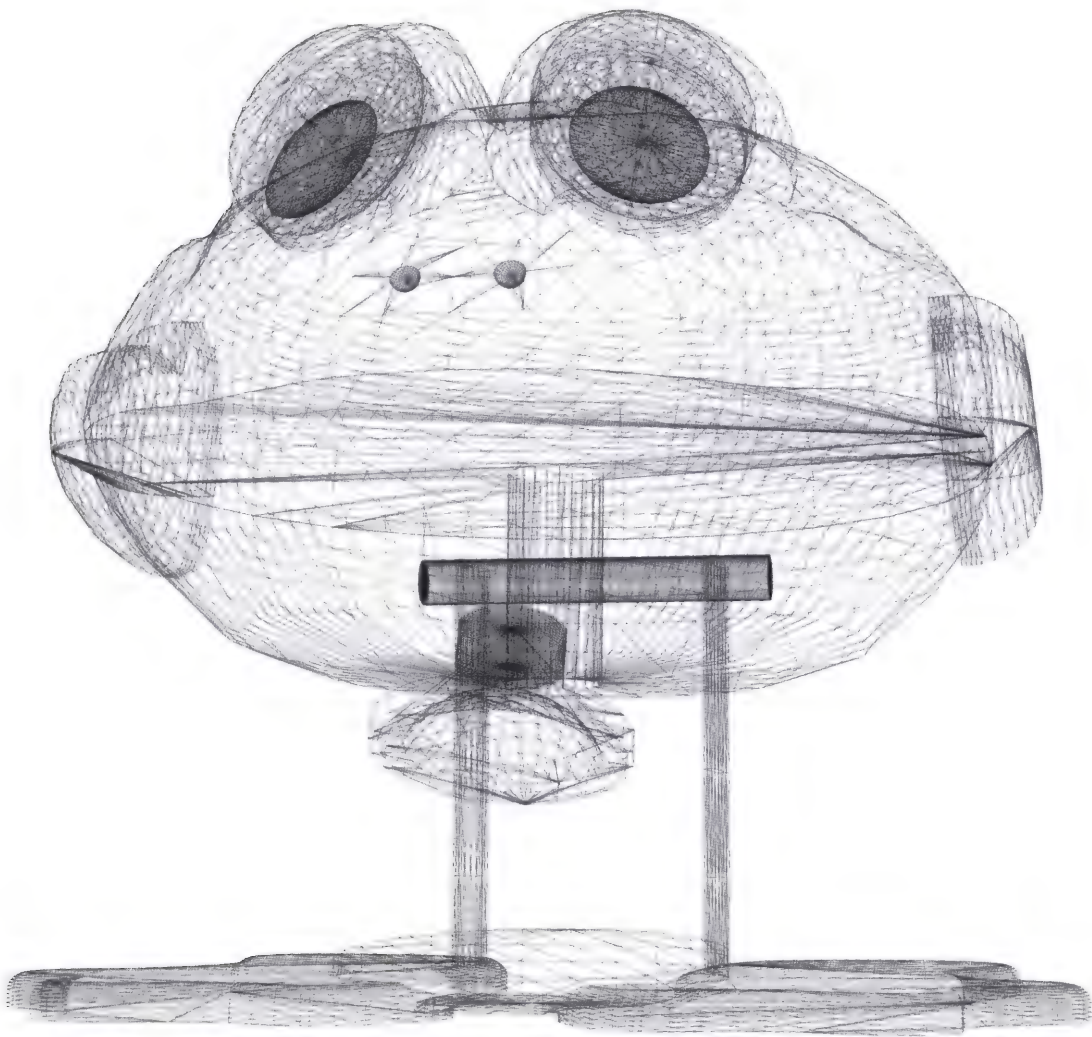
It all started from this Filipino family I used to live next door to who used to have these karaoke orgies every night where everyone in their extended family, which seemed to be half the street, would gather there and go all out on Burt Bacharach and Mariah Carey songs. Then when "Loser" was out and the album came out and we were touring, I was walking down Bourbon Street in New Orleans and there was a bunch of frat boys doing karaoke to "Loser" and now I have this little Radio Shack karaoke machine which has a built-in microphone with tape player, speaker and reverb. Reverb is essential for karaoke, really wet drench reverb. There's a little grunge karaoke tape now, they've done a pretty good replication of the music.

ARE YOU HER TO THE HANSEN FRUIT JUICEFORTUNE?

Damn, I wish. I'd retire. I have nothing to do with the beer either.

HANSEN'S BEER?

No, Beck's Beer.



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BIG GUNproject

GRAND ROYAL MAGAZINE

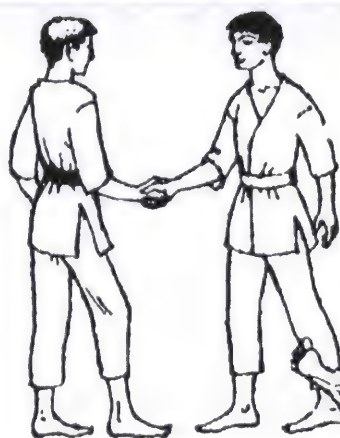


GRAND ROYAL MAGAZINE





If you truly love someone, lend them your CD's.



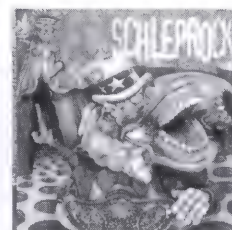
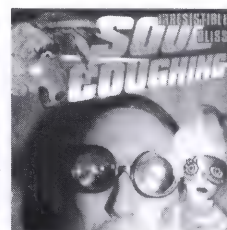
If they come back, they're yours.



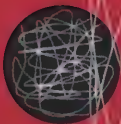
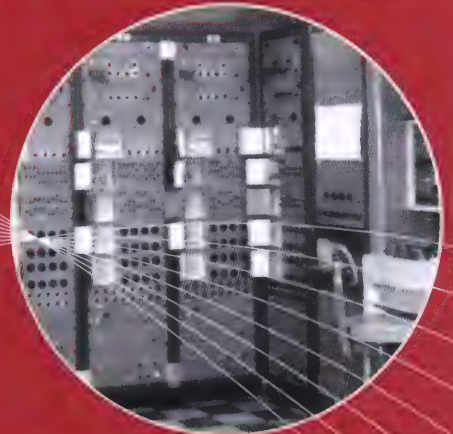
If not, hunt them down and

Kill them.

Failure: Cibo Matto: Geggy Tah: Soul Coughing: Schleprock



The Survival



It's the late 1940s, and America is recovering from WWII. The cool draft of the cold war begins to blow, convincing Communist-phobic Americans to become profoundly suspicious of themselves and foreigners. Amid the creeping paranoia and patriotism, it is a time ripe for invention as a new scientific race develops. The technological advancements which surfaced in factories run by weapon-hungry knuckleheads throughout WWII begin the shift priorities, from battle-ships to circuit boards.

The 1950s also saw the fusion of the two most dynamic forces in popular culture: Television and rock and roll. Television could not have achieved its reigning status as the chief signifying medium of the 20th century (as to where a television resides practically in every living room) without events to broadcast. By the middle '50s, those sensationalistic, attention-grabbing events happened to center around the controversial gyrations of rock and roll. As rock and roll and transistor technology meta-physically mixed themselves in the mind of pop culture—something crazy was bound to happen.

During this era of change, hobbyists like the young Bob Moog, soldering iron in hand, got busy after discovering Leon Theremin's magical, mysterious instrument. The device—played by waving one's hands in the air—gained increasing popularity as a mail order kit available in science magazines. Moog loved the Theremin for the sound, the simple technology, and the pure spirit of invention. But most of all, this oddball creation hinted at the possibility of forging something new. Bob Moog, *el numero uno nerd-o*, began formulating thoughts about "his" instrument, an invention *like* the Theremin, but better, faster, and stronger than ever before.

The cultural crock pot kept simmering as Moog fine-tuned his experiments with sound, and by the time was fresh out of college he found himself amidst a core group of people who would launch a vital chapter in the history of music. None of them realized what the hell they had stumbled across—



of the Fattest

An exploration into the Sounds of Science and history of the synthesizer



that for the first time in American history, electronic technology was about to fall into the hands of creative-minded, science-sensitive people and touch off a cultural revolution. The Moog proved that new instruments were necessary to keep rock rolling.

The 1960s and the Moog were forever wed with the release of the Walter Carlos project *Switched-On Bach*, the first fully synthesized record. The reign of the Moog came at the same time as psychedelics, electronic instruments in surf music à la the Beach Boys, a rabid British Invasion by the Beatles and Stones, backed with an underground growing catalog of novelty records. Moog fulfilled every niche it wedged itself into, and hundreds upon thousands of Moog synthesizers infiltrated every nook and cranny of every recording studio, nightclub, and concert hall.

The synthesizer, in its golden age, became a perfect pop by-product: geniuses immediately realized its potential to produce any sound imaginable, and commercial exploiters snatched it up as a way to reap in loot. In shorter words, a synthesizer industry emerged to such excess that audiences couldn't possibly have been expected to tolerate it anymore. Second rate Moog imitations (i.e. ARP) soon arose, and third rate Roger Corman-esque obscure competitors produced audio oddities too innumerable to mention.

By the 1970s the signs were in the air that synthesized music was peaking in popularity. Synthesizers, now available in any music store, became furniture, not an ark to ride on into other galaxy. David Bowie had a Moog built into his powder blue Lincoln Continental to accent the plants, TV and paintings inside. Funk, the flip side of pop, produced some of the most notable tracks of the era until disco shuffled its way in through the out door. Rock sagged and lagged behind, despite (some would say because of) the arrival of a new genre, Prog Rock, which took the Man-Machine metaphor a mile too far with its synthesizer based Frazetta dreamscapes.

The 1980s were about getting paid and being modern; the analog synthesizer no longer provided enough of either. Moog was a division of a musical instrument manufacturing conglomerate—Bob had sold the name—and synthesizers prices were sinking lower than ever as digital became the standard. As the synthesizer industry lay in ruins and scrambled to reinvent itself, outdated electronics flooded into pawn shops, closets and attics along with the 8-track and 8-bit Ataris.

And now it's come full circle, with a twist. Along with the technology to propel us forward we have the archeology of a lost civilization to mine. As the Moog sound becomes increasingly en vogue, it's a reminder that we can re-evaluate our own Do-It Yourself revolution and place emphasis on a Build-It-Yourself one instead.

As always, *Grand Royal* will gladly take you back to square one to find out who made it with the freak-freak first. We made them recall, recollect and, once and for all, set the record straight. ☿

Bob Moog: Scientific Method Man

an interview and overview of the roots and revival of the moog synthesizer and the theremin.

questions prepared by steve knezevich, interview conducted by jamie fraser



Can you basically start by telling us about your growing up, schooling, and stuff like that.

I was born and brought up in New York City in a section of Queens called Flushing, just your basic residential neighborhood. I liked to build electronic things as a hobby. My father was an engineer and we built things together. First, it was one tube to two tube radios, then it was other musical novelties. Finally, when I was 14, I built my first Theremin. By the time I was 19 and starting college, I had written an article on how to build a Theremin and was making Theremins for money. So, I've been in the electronic musical instrument business since I was 19—42 years. From 1958 on through 1965, I was a graduate student at Cornell getting my doctorate in Engineering Physics. In 1961 I decided I would write another article on how to build a Theremin and I'd also sell kits through the magazine *Electronics World*. I was surprised that *Electronics World* put a picture of the instrument on the front cover, and all of a sudden we got all these orders for kits. That's how we got into the Theremin kit business and we're still in that business. We still make the best Theremin kits in the world (laughs), naturally.

It was in 1963 when I was at a Music Teacher's Convention demonstrating the Theremin that I met a composer by the name of Herb Deutsch. Herb was teaching at Hofstra University on Long Island. Herb and I became good friends quickly and in the early part of 1964 we actually worked together for a couple of weeks. We had no budget, no funding. We just decided to get together for the fun of it. He told me what kind of sounds he wanted, what kind of music he wanted to put together, and I built a couple of experimental circuit boards. In the summer of 1964, Herb and I took a drive up to Toronto, Canada, to show the people at the University of Toronto Electronic Music Studio what we had done. They got all excited and thought it was all really interesting. The next thing I know, sometime around September 1964, I get a call from a woman by the name of Jacqueline Harvey. She was running the Audio Engineering Society Convention in New York City and wanted to know if we wanted to exhibit our stuff. She said, "We hear you people are doing some interesting things up there..." So I came down with these little handmade prototypes that I had, little boxes with panels on 'em that could shape sounds in different ways, and I was exhibiting

them next to all the big professional audio equipment manufacturers of the time, and 'lo and behold we began getting orders for synthesizers. Of course, nobody called them synthesizers back then. It was modular electronic musical equipment. So, that was the beginning of my being in the synthesizer business.

I lived in a small town in New York State called Trumansburg. We had a shop there from 1964 right up through 1971. That's where most of the modular analog Moog synthesizers were made. In 1971, I sold the controlling interest to a man who moved us all to Buffalo and prepared, or puffed the company up, so it could be resold to a much larger company. In 1973, Moog Music, my company, was sold to the Norlin Industries which was a very large manufacturer of musical instruments at that time. Moog Music became the Moog division of Norlin Industries. It remained that way until, I think, about 1984 or so, at which time both Moog and Norlin fell into the dust and disappeared from the face of the earth. By that time I'd left the company. I had moved to North Carolina and we were building a house out in the woods and I was also doing some consulting and some design work on new sorts of musical instruments.

In 1983, Ray Kurzweil, the founder of Kurzweil Music Systems, invited me to come to his company and, when I was there, offered me the opportunity to do some consulting and what started as a couple of days consulting turned into a year and that went on to six weeks, and before I knew it I was working full time for Kurzweil and we were living in Boston, rather than North Carolina. I contributed a bit to the design of all the Kurzweil gear, like the very well known Kurzweil 250—the first keyboard instrument where a really good piano sound was resonant inside the instrument, it didn't have to load up from a disk. You just plugged it in, turned it on, and played, and it sounded like a very good grand piano. That's still Kurzweil's claim to fame, you can buy a Kurzweil instrument today that has the highest quality grand piano sound around. I left Kurzweil in the end of 1989—the reason being that Kurzweil was beginning to run out of money too, it happens very often in the electronic musical instrument business. It's a tough place to make a living. A lot of companies lose it and just go bankrupt.

I returned then our home in North Carolina and for several years taught part time at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. I taught analog synthesis and music audio technology. Then about two years ago we had a chance to expand. We moved my very small shop at the end of the road, out in the woods, into town here in Asheville and started a full time business, with a professional stance to design and build Theremins, MIDI equipment and a variety of analog gear. That's where we are today.

How do you feel about reissuing old music on CD, like repackaging and reselling older stuff?

I think that's a great idea. I lived all the way through the life of vinyl. I can remember in 1948 when the first LPs came out, and before that records were made out of shellac. Quite a few shellac records were sold and that's all there was—three minutes on a side. You had record changers which broke very easily and they were very, very noisy. Vinyl was much better than that, but not perfect. Now CDs, for what most people want, are much better than vinyl. I can't think of one piece of music myself where the background noise of vinyl contributes something to the music, except if you're really into nostalgia. I'm not into nostalgia, I look forward. I'm an analog guy who's building an instrument [the Theremin—ed.] here with my crew, an instrument from the 1920s, but I'm looking forward. I'm looking to take advantage of the latest technology.

Was there ever a track that you wished would have been recorded on a Moog that wasn't?

I can't think of any. I remember we had competition in the early '70s—ARP was Moog's competition. Joe Zbarbanello of Weather Report did some wonderful things. Stevie Wonder did some wonderful things. They all liked ARPs better than Moog. It never occurred to me to wanna hear what they were doing on an ARP on a Moog instead. It was all interesting to me.

Are there any records that were done on the Moog that you wouldn't like to see re-released?



Here's what happened. *Switched-on Bach*, by Walter Carlos and Benjamin Folkman, was released at the end of 1968. In one huge leap, it set high standards for the entire industry. The music business didn't realize that's what *Switched-on Bach* did, but instead many people thought that *Switched-on Bach* was the first horse out of the gate in this new fad called synthesizer music or electronic music, and all you had to do to run in this race was get yourself a synthesizer and do some music. In 1969 we were very, very busy. We built synthesizers for all these commercial music producers in New York, Los Angeles, and London who were all trying very hard to make their million seller records for 1969 and 1970. Almost none of them did. There were few good records, most of them were just cynical also-rans. There was synthesizer mood music, country music, jazz, Swiss folk music and big band music, and a lot of it was pretty damn dull if I do say so myself. Though while I wouldn't go as far as to say I wish it never happened, it certainly didn't yield any good at the time. What happened was that all these records came out and nobody bought 'em because they weren't worth listening to, and when nobody buys something the industry comes to the conclusion that it was a mistake to bank on these synthesizers. After 1970, a lot of used synthesizers were on the market and nobody bought new synthesizers because all these records had failed.

Are there significant recordings unlike those "novelty" records which are kind of obscure that would be almost obvious to you, yet most people wouldn't know?

Whenever I think of MiniMoogs, I think of a record that Jan Hammer and Jerry Goodman made. I don't think of it as an obscure record, but I'm sure it's not as well known as some of the Beach Boys, Rolling Stones, and Beatles records. The record is called *White Children*. Jan Hammer plays MiniMoog a lot on that album and it sounds great. There's one cut called "No Fear" which is all MiniMoog. It was one of the very first multi-track uses of the MiniMoog that really sounds great. Why is that? OK, the MiniMoog sounded good, but that's not the reason. The reason is because Jan Hammer is an incredible musician.

When do you think the Moog got possibly too popular, or maybe even too goofy?

Well, it was pretty awful goofy in the 1960s. By the early '70s musicians figured out how to incorporate it in regular rock and jazz music then it became less of a goofy novelty. There was a record back in the late '60s by Gershon Kingsley and Jean-Jacques Perrey called *The In Sound From Way Out*, that was very heavily novelty—funny sounds, Spike Jones type things. That's one way of using the instrument. Fortunately, it's turned out to be not the only way. Most people don't, when they think of making goofy sounds now, first think of the MiniMoog.

I'll tell you about one record that I was actually at the session. It's called *Zodiac Cosmic Sounds*, and to show you how far back it goes—it was released in mono. Mono, folks! Not even stereo, and it was only on vinyl, of course. *Zodiac Cosmic Sounds*, the front cover was all these wild swirls that you'd expect from a '60s head record. That's what they called them back then: head music. *Zodiac Cosmic Sounds* was composed by Mort Garson, who was a film composer, and produced by Alex Hassilev, who were all LA musicians. The very beginning of the record was absolutely the first use of a Moog modular synthesizer on the West coast. It consisted of this note of 10 different frequencies gliding upwards that begins the record after it starts off with that glide, sort of conventional "bum-bum-bum, ba-bum, ba-bum, baah-umm." Then this voice of Cyrus Faryar, I think his name was, says, "Nine times the coret explodes like heated blood, battle's on...bum-bum-bum, ba-bum, ba-bum, baah-umm!" The producers were tickled with it. **They thought anybody who ever took a hit of acid was gonna have to have one of these records.** For all I know that's what happened, but today when you listen to it, it sounds funny. It's a hoot.

Can you go into some depth about the people you had relationships with during the early days? Someone like Gershon Kingsley...

First off, the difference between New York City and Los

Angeles in the late '60s was that New York City was the center of commercial music in the United States, and Los Angeles was where they made films. The musicians in New York City were really professionals—they studied at Juilliard or the Manhattan School of Music, they walked around with black jackets and white shirts. They were serious. There was none of this laid back, you know, let it all hang out associated with LA today. Gershon Kingsley was one of those people. I think he was born in Europe, lived for awhile in Israel and then came to this country to develop a career for himself as a musician and composer. He hooked up with Jean-Jacques Perrey, around when I first him in 1967 or so, and the two of them together did this *In Sound From Way Out* in New York City. Kingsley and I became pretty good friends, in fact he came up to visit me in Trumansberg and I went down to visit him in New York. He made quite a few other records. One of the nearest records he made was called *Gershwin: Alive and Well in Underground*. He played all the parts, for instance on "Rhapsody in Blue," on the synthesizer. I think that's a wonderful record. I really enjoy listening to it, even today. When a record stands up over 25 or 30 years like that, it's really something. Kingsley did a lot of experimenting. He did some Jewish Liturgical Music on synthesizer that was interesting. Oh, and then he started the First Moog Quartet: Four guys playing modular synthesizers on stage. They toured around, they played New York City, and it wasn't easy to play a modular system on stage but these guys did okay. Today with MIDI and digital synthesizers all that has been made a lot easier, but back then it was a challenge and a half. I saw him recently—he's still in New York—and he still makes a career for himself. He's certainly one of the people who opened other musician's ears to what the synthesizer could be used for.

Would you consider "Popcorn" to be the first Moog hit?

I'm not sure when "Popcorn" came out. I think *Switched-On Bach* came out before "Popcorn," so that might have been the first. "Popcorn" was one of the pieces that the First Moog Quartet played. I can remember them playing that live and I think everybody was surprised that it became as popular here and in Europe as it was.

How about the name you mentioned before, Jean-Jacques Perrey? How did he combine his fascination with the Ondioline into working with synthesizers?

Jean-Jacques Perrey developed considerable skill with the predecessor to the synthesizer. He played a little electronic keyboard that was developed in France right after the second World War called the Ondioline. It was a monophonic instrument so it only played one note at a time. Jean-Jacques was a good enough musician to be able to play idiomatically and any sort of music. He could play violin music and make this thing sound like a violin. He could play trumpet music and make it sound like a trumpet. There weren't that many Ondiolines, I don't know how many there were, but I think that was the only one I actually ever saw. Another thing that Jean-Jacques Perrey was very good at was tape splicing. I remember him splicing together sounds to get Spike Jones novelty effects. He was very precise and very good at it. The result was a bit corny, but it was still good. It was good corn.

How about Walter Carlos? How did he first get a hold of a Moog?

Let's call her Wendy Carlos, because that's how people know her today. Wendy was a student of Vladimir Ussachevsky, director of the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center in New York City. Carlos was a musician with enough intelligence and intellectual curiosity to learn a great deal about computers, astronomy, and all sorts of scientific things. After graduating from Columbia and finishing her studies with Ussachevsky, Carlos got a job in mid-town Manhattan as a recording engineer. She began to order some modular equipment that we were making at the time. We delivered the first modular instruments to the studio where she worked, and then she began to set up her own little production studio in one corner of her living room at home. She knew enough about tape recorders to build her own 8-track recorder out of surplus Ampex parts, that's 8-track on one inch. Back then 8-track recorders were still pretty exotic things, sort of like hard disc recording is today. They were the absolute latest thing so the idea of putting your own recorder together was pretty far out, but she did. In fact if you look at a record jacket of *Switched-On Bach* and you'll probably see a picture of that studio—that recorder with the old Ampex panels and stands. In that studio, Carlos did a lot of a lot of interesting experiments. Some of them were corny, some of them were serious. Then out of these experiments the idea for *Switched On Bach* arose. Carlos had two friends, Benjamin Folkman, who was a musician, and Rachel Elkind, who knew quite a bit about the music business, in fact worked as an executive assistant for CBS. That's how Carlos got into using synthesizers and that's how *Switched On Bach* got started.

How about Dick Hyman? What was it like when he premiered the MiniMoog in Rochester in 1971? (Bob laughs.) Who was there? Was this what people were waiting for, scientists and musicians...?

I felt very lucky that he would take an interest, enough to make an album, out of new instruments. After he made the records I got to meet him and we became friends. I remember being at his house one night. He came through Trumansberg in either 1970 or '71, and we had one of the prototypes of the MiniMoog. He said he was going to perform at the Eastman school in Rochester. We showed him how to use the MiniMoog, so he took it with him. I don't think he had it for very long at all. We went up to hear his concert. I remember him getting a good hand, but there was no sense that this was a revolution. People knew about modular synthesizers and here was something that sounded like a modular synthesizer, only a little bit smaller. It was interesting to a lot of musicians, but it wasn't revolutionary.

How about Walter Sear? He was one of the original sales reps for Moog Music, right?

Actually, Walter Sear got me into this business. At the music teacher's convention that I first met Herb Deutsch at, I was at Walter Sear's booth. Once we began making synthesizers, Walter became our representative for the New York City area and was the one who went out and showed all the commercial music producers in New York City this new instrument. He got dozens, literally dozens, of people making synthesizer music for commercials. That's how most people first heard synthesizer sounds—as sort of sound effects or little novelty things in commercials. He remained our distributor right through the '70s, and once we became a part of Norlin, I think Walter's involvement ended because, as a part of Norlin, Moog Music sold only two musical instruments out of many for them, so they didn't need any kind of representatives.

Shortly after that Walter had the idea of starting a recording studio in New York City using only vacuum tube equipment. In the early '70s, that was a big joke. People were buying transistors and ICs, which were wonderful, and later upgraded to digital recording. Whenever anybody wanted to be really hip back then they'd do an album on the very best, latest, and hippest equipment so they'd only look for one of these new transistorized or digital recorders. Well, it's funny the way things go around in circles, because now if you want to be absolutely the hippest person you look for somebody who has a vacuum tube analog recorder, and if you're in New York City the first place—maybe the only place you look—is Sear Sound, which is more active than ever in the recording business. Sear Sound is a very highly regarded studio completely equipped with analog vacuum tube electronics. Here is a case where the very best properties of vacuum tube analog electronics is used to make extremely high quality recordings, maybe even higher quality master recordings than you could make digitally—maybe. We're not talking vinyl or cassette tapes here, we're talking the absolute top level analog recordings.

Paul Beaver was also one of the original sales reps too?

In the '60s Paul Beaver had a business in Hollywood. He catered to people who were making music for film. He had a warehouse full of novelty—well, novelty is not the right word—of unusual electronic and other keyboard instruments. For instance, he had five Hammond Novachords that had been modified, so he could do special funny things with them. Like when he did a glissando on the keyboard like this [makes as motion as though running his hand across the keys of a

piano] what would come out would be an arpeggio, instead of a glissando. The switches on the front took an enormous amount of wiring, but once you had that you could rent it out. He ran an important facility for people who were making music back then in Hollywood. He heard about us in 1967 and came out. Our agreement with Paul was that he would set up an exhibit at the Audio Engineering Society convention in Los Angeles. Today the Los Angeles Audio Engineering Society convention is a huge thing, because so much of the music business has migrated to Los Angeles, but back then the convention was held at this dowdy, little, old hotel called the Hollywood Roosevelt. There might have been 20 or 30 exhibits then. It was a very small show, much more intimate than what was in New York City. When we got off the plane in Hollywood Paul Beaver waited for us to come off the first class exit, and we came out of the cheap seats. He couldn't figure out why we weren't rich, and in fact we still aren't—that's an aside. As baggage, we brought the first analog modular synthesizer to be shown on the West Coast. Paul looked at it in his shop before we took it to the AES show and tuned it up, checked it out, and then we set it up at the show. He contacted a lot of his customers, people who rented his other equipment, and they came down. As each one came down they got excited. They left and they told all their friends. So, by the second day of the show, there were people standing four and five feet deep waiting to see this modular synthesizer. I remember Emil Richards, a pop percussionist out there, he had his earphones on and played the keyboard, turning the knobs and saying, "Oh man! Oh man! Oh man! There goes my Jaguar!" That's how it was for people who put that kind of money in. It didn't cost as much as a Jaguar, but almost as much. Today, there isn't too much synthesis equipment that'll cost as much as even a Volkswagen, let alone a Jaguar. Emil Richards, Jack Colson, Alex Hassilev and Mort Garson all bought one. All these are people were very, very active in what was then a small music scene in Hollywood. Paul, I think, sold the most of our modular systems of anybody. He got all those instruments into the hands of musicians in Los Angeles.

Who were the other original sales reps? Dave VanKovering? Do you have any stories about him?

Oh my gosh, well Dave is a guy who has ideas always flying out of his head, all the time. Couple that with the fact that he was actually trained as a minister, his father was a minister. Dave really knows how to persuade people. He knows how to look them right in the eye, use his hands, and capture the tension and sell. Persuade people. He's still like that. I met Dave around 1970. At that time he had a one man show. It was an interesting idea, I thought. He was young, maybe in his twenties. He drove a truck full of novelty instruments which he had arranged so he could wheel everything off the truck and set it up in like a half an hour. He developed a presentation using novelty instruments in which he talked about making sound to school children. I'm not sure how he did this, but he would set a tour for himself where over a period of a month or two he would average two or three shows at different schools a day. He'd pull his truck up to the school, wheel everything out, set it up, give a show, put it back in and then go to another school, two or three times a day. He was making pretty good money doing that, back then. No one show was very lucrative, but he was doing two, three shows a day, five days a week, so it was all right. He had a Theremin, but wanted a modular synthesizer to include in his act to keep it up to date. That's when I first got to know him. He came to us as first as a customer.

Dave was friendly with a very good music merchandiser who sold home organs in the Florida area. In the early '70s the two of them cooked up the idea of actually selling Moog synthesizers in music stores. This is the famous story. Musical instrument dealers actually weren't interested in the MiniMoog. They weren't interested in instruments with 20 or 30 knobs on the front, that was too complicated. You couldn't sell that to musicians, or so they thought. So, when Dave took the MiniMoog into a musical instrument store to give a demonstration the guy would throw him out. They would say 'nobody's gonna buy that, get out!' So eventually, Dave developed a technique as follows: after being thrown out of a store he would check into a local Ramada Inn or Holiday Inn. When the band showed up, he'd show the MiniMoog to the keyboard player. The keyboard player knew instantly what the MiniMoog sound was. A keyboard player can relate to that, it had keys, it had knobs, it made all these wonderful sounds. Then when the keyboard player said, 'Man, how can I get one of these things?' Dave answered, 'Well, I'd like you to meet me tomorrow at 10 o'clock at such-and-such music store.' Then the next day at 10 o'clock at such-and-such music store Dave and his musician friend would come in

and he would say to the music store owner, 'Well, here is your first customer for a MiniMoog. Now let's order two of them, huh? One for this guy and one to have on the floor.' That's basically the story of how MiniMoogs and other synthesizers got to be sold in music stores. It's hard to imagine today that you can go to a discount department store and you can buy something that's more complicated than the MiniMoog was back in 1970, but back then the music dealers didn't believe you could sell something like that to a musician.

Can you relate to what's happening with video games and the virtual reality phenomenon? Do you think your work somewhat is related to the hand-eye electronic revolution? You experimented with joysticks to begin with, right?

Musical instruments have always been extremely interactive. Any musical instrument, that's any good at all, provides physical feedback from even before you play a note. You play a piano, you feel the key, feel it going down even before the sound comes out. It's that feedback that you use to know how hard to strike in order to get the sounds you want. The visual feedback, the way the keys look, and what you get when you hit them is a very important part of playing the keyboard. Playing a violin, let's say, is a situation where you're always in physical contact with the string. You feel the vibration. The bow has a certain feel and as soon as you put it on the string, that feel changes. Without that response you can't play a violin. I don't care how much you hear, you can't play a violin without feeling all the things that you feel. Your fingers on the strings, and on the bow. For instance a trumpet, you think the sound comes out of a trumpet. It does, but it starts all the way down here [points to his stomach]. The air goes back and forth, and you really feel the notes all the way down into your lungs.

The interactive thing has always been important to me, and for that reason it's related to the interactive nature of video games. Granted, there's not much to look at when you're playing the violin, but there's so much else going on that the density of information is on the same order as from what you get from a fast moving video display. **Are there any connections between the sounds that come out of video games, say the old Atari 2600, and the instruments you've created?**

Sure. A lot of the video game sound chips were digital models of analog synthesizers.

Do you play video games?

(laughing) Not frequently, no.

What were the attitudes about electronic storage and retrieval in the past? Are there relationships to the laws of today in sampling? Selecting different sound of different electronic instruments...?

The sound of one note from an instrument is not music. I wouldn't say that Kurzweil swiped sounds, rather they paid musicians. The famous Kurzweil string sound, for instance, was made by the string section of the Boston symphony. Kurzweil paid very dearly to have the musicians make that sound. The sound of the piano, on the other hand, was made by a mechanical finger. In neither case was anything "stolen," they just used the most appropriate way for making the sounds, then you recorded that to make music.

Are you familiar with music today that uses Moogs and Moog sounds? Or some of the newer Theremin music that's been out, say with The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion? Or even Captain Beefheart?

I've heard a little bit of that. I think some of it is in the same category as Synthesizer records when they first came out. As time goes on, people will groove in on certain ways of playing the Theremin, and certain types of sounds will be less wrapped up in the novelty of it. The Theremin is a very expressive instrument. It's easy to make wild sounds with, but hard as hell to play. As time goes on more and more people will learn how to play it correctly. When it's played with real control, it's a very beautiful instrument. I get to hear dance music that's popular. A year and a half ago I got to be at a whole weekend festival in London of that kind of stuff. People came with their modular synthesizers, unproduced dance music. **Is it true that the patent for the boards on the original MiniMoog is up this year? Are there people that are recreating the boards and bootlegging Moogs? Are there any battles that you foresee?**

(sighs) There is no one patent for the MiniMoog. It's a whole collection of circuits, I think there are probably several things in it that are patented. The best known patent for all the Moog sound stuff is the patent on the voltage controlled, low pass filter: the part of the instrument that goes "Woooooww" and makes the big fat bass sounds or the trumpet-like sounds. It's responsible for a wide variety of sounds that are distinctly analog. The patent for that

has expired. It's been expired for quite a few years now. Anybody who wants to, I suppose, could make a MiniMoog. The Moog trademark is undergoing a change, I really don't know who owns it at this point. The only fair thing to say is that the original MiniMoog design, was the right kind of design to have in 1970. I don't think it's the right kind of design to have now, because a lot of those parts are unavailable and much better parts have since become available. Anybody who wants to do a really good job of making an instrument that sounds like a MiniMoog, and looks like a MiniMoog, would not copy the old circuitry. A lot of people don't agree with that. They say that it has to be just that way in order to sound *just that way*. I take the view of a) a person who looks ahead and b) a person whose job it is to design new things.

A good example is Steinway pianos. The wood in today's Steinway pianos is by no means the same as the wood that was used a 100 years ago. Plastic is used today, which is superior to anything that was available 100 years ago. Even the screws used in Steinway pianos are not only more available today than those used a 100 years ago, but they work better. Any musical instrument builder always looks for ways to improve, even while he keeps the sound and the playing character exactly the same. You'd think that after 20 or 30 years it'd be all right for somebody else to use my ideas. It never occurred to me to think that anyone making Moogs today were stealing. The patents' expired, anybody can do it legally. I don't own it, so that's fine.

Are you planning on remanufacturing any Moog-like products?

Big Briar may introduce products that take off from or pick up from where the MiniMoog left off. Needless to say, I have ideas on what to do going forward. I think it's safe to say that although I know how to make instruments that sound every bit as good as the MiniMoogs of the 1970s, I'm not particularly interested in making instruments that sound just that way. I'd be interested in making new sounds too.

In the past, we've featured feuds as a part of Grand Royal. Do you have anything to say about Don Buchla and some other competitors you've had in the past?

Don Buchla and I were never really competitors. We both introduced modular synthesizers around the same time. It was a strictly coincidence. We didn't know about him and I don't think he knew about us. It was 1963-1964 that we both began in the modular synthesizer business. He took an entirely different aesthetic approach—building equipment that made a lot of fairly simple sounds which could be sequenced. His instruments were very good at making patterns and sort of arpeggios, sequences of notes that were distinctly electronic and could be put into new kinds of music. It took a long time before Don Buchla even considered using a conventional keyboard. He wasn't interested in his customers being able to produce conventional music made of melodies and harmonies. I have a great deal of respect for what Don does. He's a very creative guy and the musicians he builds instruments for are very creative musicians. I see him at concerts and shows once every year or two. As time goes on we become more and more friendly and interested in what one another are doing. I used to think of Don as a little more than a young kid. Now he's a grandfather, like me.

Our relationship with ARP was different. ARP, a slick bunch of Boston-based electronics businessmen who got into the synthesizer business because they saw an expanding market and competed with us directly, was our direct competitor. Their first modular synthesizers didn't use patch cords. They used these very expensive and fussy slide switches. Then they began making instruments that were reminiscent of the MiniMoog in size, or maybe a little bit smaller. They had their sound and we had our own sound. As it turns out, ARP went bankrupt in a big way, in the late I think it was maybe 1978 or 1980, well before the digital revolution happened. What happened, I think, was that they decided to build the ARP Avatar, a guitar synthesizer. It was very expensive and didn't work well, and didn't really meet the needs of guitar players. They invested most of the company's resources in the Avatar figuring that there were so many guitar players that they'd certainly sell a bunch of them. They didn't and that was the end of ARP. That happens very frequently in the electronic musical instrument business. I'm very lucky that never to happened to Moog Music. Moog Music never went bankrupt and as far as I know it still exists, somewhere.

How about Raymond Scott and Eric Siday? They used the Modular Moog mainly for radio and television use.

Eric Siday was a very well known composer of commercial sound, a pioneer. In his upper west side apartment he had one studio room with an experimental 8-

track recorder: 8-tracks on 35mm sprocket tape. The sort of recorder used in movies back then. I don't know how many tape recorders there were in the world like that, for sure that was the only one I've ever seen. He put together music for radio and TV commercials long before most people saw that as an opportunity. If you listened to the radio around the early 1960s you would hear an American Express commercial or the Maxwell House Perking Coffee Pot commercial, and back then all of these were a part of everybody's listening experience. Everybody knew these sounds and Eric Siday was making them. I think he got the second modular synthesizer that we ever made, and with that he made a lot of the very well known commercials back in the late '60s.

Do any other commercials of his stand out to you?

He made the CBS sound logo. I don't think I could mimic it. It was five seconds of sound which, as reported in *Time* Magazine in 1968, Eric Siday got paid \$25,000 dollars for those five seconds of sound. That was the playing field he operated in.

Raymond Scott was another story altogether. Raymond Scott and Eric Siday together, in the privacy of their own experimental studios, developed all sorts of interesting ideas for using electronic sounds in radio commercials. Raymond Scott had a television show at the time: *The Lucky Strike Hit Parade*. He was very wealthy and, when I first met him, had a four story mansion on Long Island. His entire basement was sort of a playground for him with all this machinery. You could make anything out of wood, metal, or electronics. He had a recording studio that was as big as most people's houses. He had all sorts of mechanical sequencers made out of telephone relays. The guy was a very creative guy, but an absolute madman. He wasn't schooled as an engineer, he was a successful musician. He had the idea of a) building all this funny electronic and electro-mechanical stuff and b) using it to make all kinds of sounds. Like Siday, Raymond Scott got a lot of his stuff into radio and TV commercials, but he went much farther out in experimenting and actually did pieces of music with all this equipment he built.

Do you want to talk a little bit about the shoulder strap Moog?

You mean the Moog Liberation? (laughs) By the time Moog developed the Liberation I was no longer associated with synthesizer development in the Moog company. I still worked for Moog Music, but the corporate powers that be gave me the job of developing things other than synthesizers at that time. Moog Liberation, I think, was an effort to make something that looked like a guitar, and it certainly does that. (coughs) Keyboard controllers that are held by a strap shouldn't try and imitate a guitar. There are others out now that are much sleeker and fit the hand much better, they're the right direction to go for keyboards worn around the neck. Jan Hammer really liked to have a keyboard on a guitar strap. He started out with a MiniMoog keyboard, he just cut off the MiniMoog and punched it with a long cable and then attached it to this silly box around his neck. That was his beginning, but as time went on people developed much better keyboard controllers for him.

Have you created any other non-musical inventions?

One of the most fascinating and difficult projects was one that I worked on from 1972, it was always a background project, right up until, well actually I'm still working on it off and on. It's a multiple touch sensitive keyboard where every key is sensitive to motions of your finger, back and forth, sideways, and up and down. With a keyboard like that, if you practice, you can play much more expressively than any conventional keyboard. That sort of thing interests me. A keyboard like that is very expensive to make and there's not much hope that it'll become a popular instrument in the future though.

Anything non-musical though?

No.

Why did all the buy-outs of R.A. Moog Music, Moog MuSonics, Moog Music, Inc., and finally by Norlin occur? Why so many mergers? This history seems kind of fuzzy.

In 1954 when I was 19, I began a business called it R.A. Moog Company. It was part-time. I was going to school, and made Theremins in my basement after hours. It remained part time thing until 1961 when we introduced the Moog Theremin Kit, which was enormously successful. I actually stopped going to school for around six or nine months and do nothing but make and sell these kits. We were not R.A. Moog, Incorporated, but rather R.A. Moog company—which means that we were a sole proprietorship, sort of like a hot dog stand, business-wise. Very shortly after that changed to R.A. Moog, Inc., and stayed that way up until about 1971 when we

were bought out by Mr. Bill Waytena, a venture capitalist. He changed the name to Moog MuSonics because, at a business level, it was a merger of R.A. Moog Incorporated with another company he had called MuSonics. Shortly after that he changed it to Moog Music, Inc. This was the company sold to Norlin and as far as I know it's still in existence, somewhere. Norlin operated Moog Music up until about 1984, which then went bankrupt and dissolved. Moog Music was bought by a group in Buffalo who then operated it, not as a musical instrument manufacturer but as a contract electronics manufacturer. They made telephones. They made, oh, let's see, there was a Moslem prayer times calculator that they made. The point being that they were manufacturers of equipment other people would sell most of which was not musical.

They bought the name?

They bought the name and all the equipment. Moog Music, while it was at Norlin, was a big factory. It employed as many as 300 people during the early '70s. **Why did you leave in 1977 to start Big Briar?**

My employment contract was over. Bill Waytena bought R.A. Moog Inc. he signed an agreement with me that I would stay at the company for a certain period of time at the end of which my interest in the company would be bought out. I got money in exchange for my interest. So, I had to stay in order to pick up my marbles, as it were. By the end of 1977 my employment contract was through. I was able to sell my interest in the company. We won't get into what it was like to

work at Norlin, but suffice it to say it wasn't good. It was a big company. The stock was traded on the New York Stock exchange. There was always pressure to look good to the financial community. The people involved were not in love with the musical instrument business. They operated it just to make money. Their view was always short range and because of that, when the '70s were over and the music business downsized a little bit, Norlin lost it and went out of business.

What are your thoughts about selling science as a musical commodity?

I don't know. I mean, science is a tool. It's something you can use to design musical instruments with. What's particularly neat to see is a musician get his hands on an electronic instrument and understand the musical operation of the thing without going into great detail about the technology behind it. That's the only way I can think of answering that question. "Selling science as a musical commodity" doesn't describe what it is I think this business is all about.

Are you a musician?

Yes and no. I studied piano as a child. My mother gave me piano lessons—like you give somebody an enema. I didn't enjoy it. I've always thought of myself as a technical person, an engineer. While I was in college I played piano in a dance band and enjoyed that. I never went on tour and never made anything but the most meager money playing keyboard, but I do enjoy doing it from time to time. In fact, right now I'm involved in playing electronic keyboards for a local amateur theatrical production.

When you were 14, who turned you on to the Theremin?

It was because of an article on how to build a Theremin in *Radio News Magazine*, a magazine nerds like me would buy and build the interesting electronic projects it published. The Theremin was one of them. It was a nice hobbyist project back then, and it's very nice now.

People enjoy assembling Theremin kits today.

The documentary, *Theremin: An Electronic Odyssey*, seems to gloss over Leon Theremin's time in Russia working with the KGB. It seems to be a hole in the film, jumping from him being imprisoned by the KGB to an old man living in New York. Can you fill in that gap at all for us?

Not too many people can. Leon Theremin was taken to Russia, in 1938 and spent the next seven years in a Russian prison. He says in the movie that he worked on the bug amongst a whole variety of things for the Russian military. When the war ended they not only let him out, but gave him a medal of honor. Americans find it hard to imagine how a government that puts you in jail can turn around give you a medal of honor, but apparently in Russia this was somehow understandable. After the war, Theremin remained in Russia. I don't understand exactly why, but he also was never allowed out. He continued to develop musical instruments and work on his Theremin. Sometime in the 1960s he was discovered by Harold Schoenberg, a music critic for the *New York Times*, who happened to be in Moscow. He found Theremin working. I think at the Moscow conservatory, and up until then nobody knew about Theremin. It had something to do with the politics then.

Is there anything else not included in the movie that you would know about?

Not much, very little is known. Theremin himself didn't talk about it that much, and so little was known. Most people thought he was dead. Ussachevsky played in Moscow in the late '60s and visited Theremin. He came back with news that Theremin was still alive and he had a little tiny apartment in Moscow. Everybody was very excited about it.

Was he kind of a rock star for you?

More than a rock star, sort of a grandfather. He'd be like John Lennon, or maybe Glenn Miller, depending on how far back you wanted to go.

What first interested you in the Theremin?

I got to know the Theremin itself from building it out of an article. I don't think I actually heard a piece of Theremin music though until I was an adult. There were very few recordings around.

Do you picture kids today, like yourself, learning about the Theremin and getting back into electronic music?

When I first began, 40 years ago or so, companies like Heathkit and a few others made fairly high quality electronic devices for much less than usual cost ready made. You'd buy a kit of parts and wire them together. The parts were fairly big because there were vacuum tubes. They weren't that complicated, but when you got done you had something good and it was fairly cheap. Needless to say, electronics has progressed a great deal in the last 40 years. Today circuitry is much more complex. Parts are smaller and ready made electronic stuff is much cheaper than it was then. You may think, "So, why buy a kit?" The way we look at it is that it's fun to put a kit together. As long as it's not too much specialized work and a lot of soldering. Once you've built it you learn a great deal about the device, whether it's a Theremin or an amplifier. It's an educational experience what we need to learn today, as much as we needed to learn 40 years ago. And, if I am an experimental person, there's a lot I'd like to modify and adapt to my own needs. I might want controlled voltage outputs to interface with a modular analog synthesizer. I might want to build this kit up as a left-handed instrument rather than a right-handed instrument. So Big Briar sets out to offer kits that do all of these things for experimenters, amateur hobbyists, and professionals who want something good and also want to learn about what's inside, then maybe modify it once they're done.

Is this all still fun for you?

It's always been fun for me to design something and have it work well, then make a bunch of them and have people appreciate that. I'll tell you what's been absolutely the most fun for me in this business over the last 40 years has been meeting the people who play our instruments. That's been the most rewarding. They're all creative. They're all a little bit crazy, which we are too, and I can't tell you how many people I've met 20 and 30 years ago I'm still friends with. It's made me a citizen of the world, literally. I have close friends now in Japan, France, Germany, England, and all over the United States. I don't know if I could have done it any other way. ☺

WENDY CARLOS from Bach ● to the future



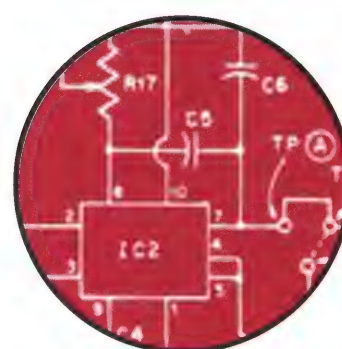
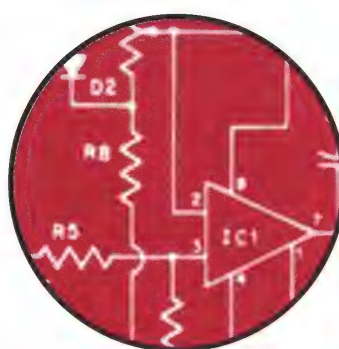
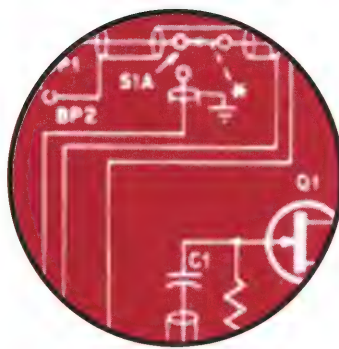


Switched-On Bach, the first fully synthesized album, simultaneously leveled the classical and pop music markets and established Wendy Carlos, as the leader in electronic synthesis. Though it spawned almost a generation of knock-offs and wannabee cover records (*Switched-On Country*, *The Plastic Cow Goes Moooooog*), those recordings never gained the singularity of *SOB*.

Yet, there is another story to tell. The *Switched-On*-style of classical-meets-pop synth records are Incredibly Strange relics from a time long gone, and they still retain a haunting, sometimes daunting, quality. Their creator, Wendy Carlos, extended her vision far and wide into worlds most pop music will never get a possibility to explore. Whether it be composing film soundtracks, working on solo projects, beta testing new synthesizers, or philosophizing and pontificating 20 minutes into the future, Wendy has much more to offer as an artist than just the person responsible for the music in *A Clockwork Orange*, *Tron*, *The Shining*, and the idea that started it all, *Switched-On Bach*.



interview by andy blinx



Is it okay to ask you about your family a little bit?

I'm a New Englander originally. I come from the greater Providence area.

Ethnically what roots do you have?

Totally mixed. My mother's parents were from two parts of Poland, one of which was right next to white Russia: the blonde, blue eyed type; the other type looked like Southern Germans: brown-eyed, shorter, broader-featured people. Then she married my father who is truly a mongrel. He has Portuguese—which is where the name comes from. His dad, besides being Portuguese, was also English, and his father was a sea captain who knew how to navigate by the stars and understood a lot of whatever the technology they had in the late nineteenth century. So, I know my love of the science and math comes directly from that side of the family too. In my mom's family—the music side—almost everybody played, sang, or danced, and played different instruments like drums, trombone, trumpet, accordion, piano, clarinet, etc. It was a nice culture to be brought up into. I was always being taken to weddings, parties and things where there was live music. They expected me to become literate in music, so I was given piano lessons since starting the first grade, age six. I was lucky that my parents cared enough, a little bit with the ruler and the knuckles routine, but I had to practice. I'm grateful for them having done that now, because I learned my ABC's and music to me now is natural. I really can't think of anything luckier for me but the breakthrough that came in the '60s and '70s. It's perfect background isn't it? I was very fortunate.

What about your early experiments with sounds?

When did this start?

In high school, I was using tape machines and did a few electronic baby pieces.

Did you ever do tape loops?

Oh yes, of course. At the time, didn't know what the others were doing. There were no places to find out. There was no computer music channel, *Keyboard* magazine, no *Studio Sound*. There weren't the good people writing about it, so instead we had to invent it. Even if we were wasting time doing what somebody else had done better, we did it again anyhow. I went into college thinking I might go into physics, because I had done some electronic music when I was in high school, even when I was in grade school...

Like what? With oscillators?

In that case I didn't have an oscillator, but there were test tone recordings that you could play on a variable speed record player. I could get different pitches from that and figured out how to do tape echo before knowing...

Before Brian Eno...

Sure. Obviously I knew you could put a loud speaker in the stall shower, and with the microphone get reverb. I learned the

tone controls and with a few other gadgets I made myself I could cobble something together. I made my own gear myself which was probably good training. But in college, I was getting bad grades and scuffling trying to keep up. Finally, I went to a professor who had invented the field of biophysics, Professor Nyborg. He said, "Why don't you combine physics and music?" and I was like, "Get out of here!" It ceased to sound funny after the fourth or fifth repetition. He called the music department people and suggested that I do this. They considered me a real weird, crackpot. I look back at that period with a lot of nostalgia.

Were you a nerd?

Sure, why not. I've played absent minded professor at times, I think that goes with the territory. What it indicates to me is a lack of a certain type of vanity that I think is probably a little healthy. I think it's rather good to have ideas that fascinate you more than just yourself, your body. It seems to me that's much less useful and more feather headed. So, if at times I turn rapidly and walk into a door or something like that, while that might be fodder for some amusement for others, it shows that my mind is not on myself.

Over the years, you've given feedback to a great many companies...

I love being a beta tester. I love it. It's a question of making tools. I want a tool that's bigger and better and capable, like a hammer—you can build a house from it, you could even commit murder with it, or you could let it rust in the garage—but anywhere within those extremes, there is a range of practical use, and that's the best kind of tools.

When you refer to your record *Switched-On Bach* as 'SOB,' is that an inside joke?

Oh yes, the name was never my own. I wanted to call it *The Electronic Bach* because somebody had done *The Baroque Beatles Book*. SOB came from CBS from the art director, John Berg. They had horrible names they wanted to call it, and we stopped laughing and we thought, well SOB might be better than *The Electronic Bach*. To me, the project had a smile around the corners of the mouth. I never considered *Switched-On Bach* to be pompous and awesome. It was good fun. I had fun doing it and expected people to smile when they heard it. It was a crossover record, when there was no such category.

Let's talk about "categories" for a moment.

Richard Rodgers once said, "What do you mean that popular music is different from classical? Are all classical pieces classics? Is all popular music popular?" It's just a foolish distinction. I love the way he went to the essence of the argument. It should all be eclectically put together. Like when people want to join such-and-such record label club—the first thing they're asked is "Which category?" Is it New New Age, or is it Heavy Metal or is Country Western Funk or Country Religion or Gothic?

Can't forget Prog Rock in there.

They first give you the label which you don't want and then they continually re-use it as though somehow it's legitimate.

That's how Ian Anderson from Jethro Tull feels about progressive. He doesn't even know what that word means and he's by far one of the godfathers of the whole movement yet he never thinks of it in those terms. That's how he keeps it original. If you think of yourself in any category, you're kind of already shot and dead.

To me the whole thing is a wild universe of possibilities and the more possibilities you have, the better for you. The line you draw for each project should be inherent to the project. It should not come from without. You're not going to do a record, hopefully, because you wish to do a techno-country record. Whatever that may be.

Crossover could also be a metaphor for your background of combining science and arts...

I'm a hybrid of interests, like a lot of people are nowadays, but at the time I walked the path,

it was considered very odd to be interested both in the sciences and in the arts. More than that, my interest in the creative side of the arts—as in my case I draw moderately okay for an untrained artist and I've always written music—is matched by the same passion I have for the sciences, astronomy, physics, and chemistry. All that stuff. It should be no surprise that a hybrid of interest is the entrance requirement to get into this field, if you're going to get into this field and make a difference. I know there's people out there who think I'm being elitist, but those who only know the computer side and could hide their musical inadequacies behind a computer. I am being a bit of a snob about it. How many people are out there that are obsessive as I am, I guess?

Well...

—No, I'm not defensive about it at all, I am happy that I am an obsessive in a way. It's one of the few things in my life. As you can see my apartment is kind of a pig sty, but my music is not. I keep my files on tape, and the rest of my life is chaotic. You've got to have a mixture.

You're constantly going in and reorganizing?

I hate to do that, there's always housework. People don't realize that this field requires such intense bookkeeping and inner discipline. Everyone's talking about chaos theory nowadays. We can become total random city.

You got to regulate how much chaos you're going to be dealing with at any given time.

I'm a skeptic in so many areas and this is one too. People talk about fractals and chaos theory as though we can replace a human being's way of creating with random processes. There have been computer programs that pretended to generate music in the '80s and it's boring. Boring is the right word. Random is boring, and if you don't put anything in of yourself, don't expect anything but noise.

You might as well have a computer listening to it at that point.

That's just how I feel.

Like they did with the chess game this year—you're not playing against a computer, you're playing against a team of five programmers. It's just an elaborate way of covering up that it's five on one. It's still a computer coalescing it.

I'm a little bit disappointed. At some points I think that we're pretending that it's humanity versus the machine, and it isn't. It's a dedicated group of people who I think deserve to get their kudos now too. I was rooting for the programmers.

Maybe that shows you that the collective mind is not quite as acute or as capable of making the lightning like decisions that enter in with real inception and creativity.

Pattern recognition is something that we do so easily, that none of the computer systems that have of so called artificial intelligence can even touch. It might not happen in our life spans. Everybody predicts that we'll have Hal 9000. I'm not sure, I think it's a bit of a crock.

There are theories that the mind is a virtual reality machine and that your conscience is really an illusion.

Yes it is, I think that's true.

There are those people who aren't the slightest bit aware are going about their lives...

Yes, of course. Since I'm an eclipse chaser, back in 1970 there was one that went all over the eastern seaboard of the US. It was amazing for me to hear stories of motorists driving during totality who did not stop the car to look at this one-time unique thing, but turned on their headlights so they could keep driving, probably muttering something like...

"Dammit, what's going on! What's wrong with this lighting?!"

I depend on a lot of my habits to get me through real world life so that my actual brain could be continually be thinking about a new theme or a new patch, sound, or a new idea on computer graphics. I guess I'm probably rather arrogant to think that I should have that right to continually do that, but I've gotten by so far.

Haven't you earned it?

I don't know when we earn anything. I think you're always proving yourself over and over during your life, and you never earn anything. I'm not very impressed by stardom either or success or fame.

We're kind of in the twilight of that phase.

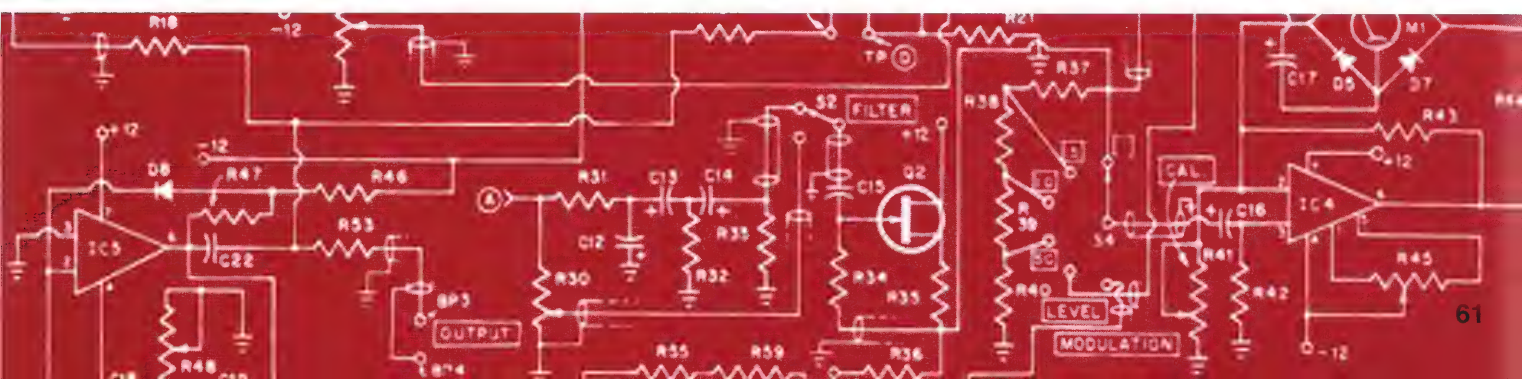
Once you get into any business that looks comfortable, clean, and neat, the offices are organized...

Nothing's getting done...

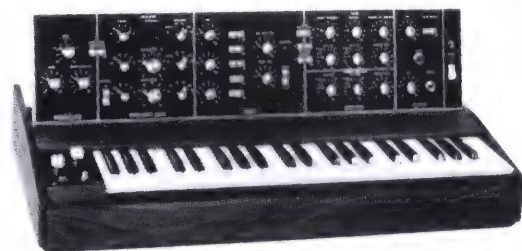
It's a dying firm. Sell your stock and get out of there. When it looks like this apartment here, then it's something you want to be a part of. Jerry Ponnell, a fine science fiction novelist, met Bob Heinlein as he was a struggling, beginning writer. Heinlein is the senior spokesperson for Science Fiction, and Ponnell managed to wheedle a couple of hours one afternoon at Heinlein's home. Heinlein was charming with him and after having been wined and dined for a few hours, showing him his novels and his typewriter, talking philosophy and plots, as he was leaving Jerry asked, "Oh gee, just one thing, how could I ever pay you back?", and Heinlein said, slightly inferior, "You can't, you pay forward." I always loved that line, because it indeed is what I'm saying right now, with no patting myself on the back. I'm trying to pay forward, pay back for the people I had to lean on to get where I got, so the next steps could be done by the younger people who are coming in without having to pay the dues I had to pay.

People are buying any of the old Moogs and synths they can find. How do you feel about the whole retro of that coming back in such tremendous force?

Sometimes I see it backsliding, though, in some of the instruments and devices that come along that are clearly really retro. Retro in an unhealthy way. It's always good to remember your roots, that part of retro is good, but to throw away progress and what we've learned is a dangerous thing. If you could graft the good properties of those older machines onto what the newer machines were also offering. The Theremin, to me, is an exercise in frustration. Yet, historically, it's so important. It's a thrill to see Bob Moog building, like he started out, these beautiful instruments. I also smile at it all. How can you not smile? It's touching and sweet, like giving a nod of approval that had been forgotten. Thank god Leon Theremin lived long enough to see that Steve's movie [*Theremin: An Electric Odyssey*] was being made. Unfortunately, Leon died just before it was shown, but at least he knew somebody was paying him some respect. ☺



the island of electronicus



Dave VanKoeveering single-handedly put the Moog sound in the hands of working musicians worldwide. He is responsible for selling hundreds of modular Moog systems and almost quadruple that in MiniMoogs (13,000 were made, and legends has it that VanKoeveering sold nearly three-quarters of those out of his car trunk) with evangelical enthusiasm, on par with the likes of '70s documentary teen preacher Marjoe Gornier. Bob Moog has stated, "The MiniMoog would have been sold if it not have been for VanKoeveering." In his travels, Dave invented sales techniques that would send the average marketing executive running for the latrine. His methods weren't like many so-called raconteurs of today, underhanded. Rather, on the creative wings of his mentors (Bob Moog, Wendy Carlos, Walter Sear), Dave found innovative ways to prove to people, who otherwise should have known better yet probably couldn't see past the initial several thousand dollar investment needed to buy a Moog synthesizer, that the popularization of the universal phatness of the Moog sound would pave the way for a complete and total change in home, studio, and live electronics. Grand Royaler let him lay down those because as we see it, the train's coming round again and, this time, there does seem to be much reason for the music.

Through the late 60s and early '70s you MC'd your own one-man performances or, more appropriately, demonstrations in public schools of the new and different sounds of electronic instruments.

I met Bob [Moog] that way as a matter of fact. I wanted to end my show with a Moog synthesizer, rather than with a Theremin. My Theremin was a hit, but audiences couldn't hear it in the culture. Modular Moogs were just beginning to get sold to studios. Wendy Carlos released *Switched-On Bach* and was on the Dick Cavett show the same week I met Bob Moog. He invited me to go with him and his parents to see the First Moog Quartet. Well, with his Aunt Dorothy.

I have been friends with Moog for many years. I've always been into musicology and the restoration of unusual, different technologies—not only electronic instruments, though mostly electronic. I've restored instruments from antiquity and from vaudeville dating back to the 1900s.

That evening, when I went with Bob to see the First Moog Quartet at Carnegie Hall, convinced me that the Moog could be played live. Everyone told me it was just a studio instrument, but I was one of the very, very few—there could have been 10 or 12 people around Bob out of the thousands that were in his life at that point—that recognized the Moog, or a version of the Moog which later became the MiniMoog, should become a mass produced instrument because of its potential for fulfilling an impor-

tant role every place men and women made music in all kinds and styles. We saw it as being important in homes, institutions, nightclubs, concert halls, and not just in the recording studio or amongst the avant garde. Because I played 27 instruments and knew a lot about different musical techniques and technologies and was doing a show demonstrating all that, I gravitated quickly to the Moog and had this (laughs) I'll let others describe it—the ability to persuade, to sell, the ability to find a way to sell. When our odds were down and music stores and musicians were telling me no—musicians said, "I don't want that," it wasn't just in the clubs and stores—I found there was something almost religious, almost convicting, almost phenomenal driving me from the inside. It didn't wear out. I never grew tired of the 'no's.' I could list 50 stores which literally asked me to leave. They threw me out. A great number of those men have since been lifetime friends. Now, they see me at different conventions or workshops, wherever I am in the industry as a consultant or with my own product, and they'll embrace me and thank me for having the courage to come back when I did not quit.

Can you expand more on this as a religious commitment?

Let's talk about Underground Atlanta. I went up to Underground Atlanta when it was in the first phase, before they shut it down and then re-did it and then it re-birthed and now it's successful again for its second phase. This was back in the first phase, in 1972 maybe. There might have been ten musicians working there and none of them had a great following. They were just good jazz or rock musicians, but the one guy that would use the MiniMoog at any level of efficiency, maybe became a familiar with a little bit of changing and modulation became more successful. He could charge more money. He would not get laid off. He'd could get any club he wanted. He could work in bands that had turned him down, all because he owned the MiniMoog. In cities like Dallas, if you did not have a MiniMoog you could not get a job as a keyboard player in 1974. For the people that had that tool, it became so important to them that it changed them economically and changed their social status. This was consistently happening all over the country, around the time that major groups began touring with the MiniMoog: Emerson, Lake and Palmer, Rick Wakeman, etc. A year or two later, after I'd opened up all those stores to the MiniMoog and I'd merged my distribution network with the mother company and moved to Buffalo, NY, I could tell you

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where Keith Emerson was the night before, any place in North America, by the phone calls that were coming into that my staff had to handle. I could tell you he was in Minneapolis last night because we had ten dealers in the greater Minneapolis area call us within a two day period. The MiniMoog, out of all electronic music, was a bigger, better, softer, more pliable lump of clay, was a new kind of technology that let you play between the sizes and shapes of acoustical. It let you play between the notes and the tones and the tambour and the shape of the sound that could be done with the other existing technologies. Hammond, as wonderful as it was, the Fender Rhodes, the Wurlitzers...

...the Lowrey...

Yes, and those early acoustic electric pianos that were metal tines moving with pick-ups on them. The difference was the Moog could go between those sounds. Unfortunately, we had to overcome the problem of monophonic, no presets, and new nomenclature. Nobody knew what modulation meant. Nobody knew what an oscillator, filter, contour generator, or an envelope was...

Because they didn't know science, or because they didn't know the product?

Those words had never been a part of the music industry nomenclature or part of what a musician did. Now, you can create a music instrument in software and give a musician a display screen and most will know what it means and does. But in 1969, no one did. Not in the music industry, the stores, or clubs.

I used to take 5 or 6 spools of different colored tape with me on the road and let a guy invent a sound with the MiniMoog. I didn't care what it was, but any configuration of knobs let them find a sound at a given oscillator setting, frequency, filters, and cut off time. I'd put little wedges of yellow tape for one sound, and green, blue, red, and white all marked off different other sounds. That's all they needed to get up in front of his audience to play. He'd go from red to green and everybody thought that he knew what he was doing, but on the way of experimenting the musician would find new musical tonality, shaping, and textures. The marketing guys are often prone to giving credit to the salesman—me, the first guy that took it to 28 countries or something—when the fact really is the musicians, the creative guys, were the ones that connected with the instruments. I suppose I'm deserving of some credit because I kept going back and kept it up until we sold as many as I had coming, because I bought them all. My company bought as many as Moog could build pre-arranged for payment. When they were shipped, he got his money, and went on to build the next month. I had a warehouse full of stuff to get rid of and stayed on the road until they were gone.

What was the name of your company?

Vako synthesizers, out of the most unusual place in the world to sell electronic instruments: St. Petersburg, Florida. I knew, from the thousands of people that attended my own concerts and the television work that I was doing with Bill Hoskins of Jacksonville University on a series on videotape that went into the Armed Services Network around the world, that people liked to hear the sounds of the Moog. I got all the mail! I did concerts and was getting the ovations and applause with all of those instruments.

Concerts? You mean in schools, or your own shows?

Both. At that time I had several different booking agencies in different parts of the country for not just schools, but for what was called the old Chataqua shows or the old Red Path Vaudeville. In the north, they had Lyceum circuits that were around up through the late-'60s and early-'70s. My father, a vaudeville entertainer, had been a Swiss bell ringer. He played a large collection of unusual instruments, part of which I inherited, part of which I gathered in a collection similar to Dad's, because our shows were contemporary to each other. I did one part of the country while Dad did another part. And I knew, from the small modular Moog Bob made in the beginning, that the people loved it.

Mr. Glen Bell, from Taco Bell restaurants, who was a multi-millionaire obviously, sponsored my show. He had bought an option on a huge auditorium/casino off the coast of St. Petersburg on the island of Terra Verde. Guy Lombardo wanted to build this gambling casino and the Kennedy family would not allow gambling in the state. Back in the late-'60s and early-'70s, it was nothing but these vacant lots and a few houses, and these gorgeous buildings that had been built for a gambling casino. Glen Bell had an option to buy them and he told me, "David, you talk about wanting to do an auditorium and a performance with your unusual instruments. I think that auditorium would work. If you could get the right promotion—radio and television image—you could use your synthesizers." I had already been setting the Moog up two nights a week in Taco Bell restaurants. Glen paid me a lot of money to do those shows, several hundred dollars a show back then, and if I did three or four of those a day, by the end of the week, I'd have made more money doing that than I could doing anything else with my skill and talent. He encouraged me, because of the audiences and the response to the Moog synthesizer, to do something at that big auditorium in the winter months of 1969-'70. We called it the Island of Electronicus. It was this huge, round building. We put in a world class (in our judgment it

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was world class, but by today's standard I shudder to think what we thought was world class) light show in it. It was a great show. We had 5 or 6 MiniMoogs, a modular Moog, and pre-recorded tapes. It was a big concave roof, a huge dome in the top of this huge, round building. We put pillows on the floor. It was like a coffee house, open for teenagers because we didn't serve alcohol. We'd do three shows a night. The place would fill up for three shows every night, and I introduced the world's first performing environment for the Moog. Those people, those audiences, that applause, that show, the music, so convinced me—we were doing the kind of stuff Gershon Kingsley done up at Madison Square Garden. Walter Sear had done on his albums, and Paul Beaver and Bernie Krause did—that audiences loved it. It was that kind of sound and response that encouraged me.

We had technicians there so that any keyboard musician from the audience could come up and jam with us. The technicians would have them understand the knobs through a headset and I had an earplug in so I could hear what they were doing. Every now and then you'd get some guy that was really good and we'd put the spotlight on him. I'd patch him through the PA system with a foot switch I was directing as I was performing on stage. He could become solo in the show, and many keyboard artists learned about the MiniMoog by playing in our show, which was a totally one-of-a-kind place. It had never been done before that, that I'd heard of. I've never heard of it done since. It was a unique way to involve interaction with the audience. We'd do a 40 minute show, start off by letting them hear the sound of the sun rise, and then with Moog synthesizers we gave them the experience of the sound of night. The cool, cold wind. You'd hear the night sounds of the animals and crickets, a coyote way in the distance. You'd hear the night and then this three toned chord would begin, then it became a 5, an 8, a 12, then a 20 note chord. It became a chord that would crescendo up to the brilliance and brightness of sunrise, and we'd give them that at the beginning of the show. We'd have five minutes of applause. That sound was inspired by Paul Beaver. He had done something similar to that on In a Wild Sanctuary. That was the inspiration for that sound, but we created it with tapes and with the big Moog (which wasn't really big, just a few oscillators) and several MiniMoogs. I had a left and right hand MiniMoog. We had four across the front of the stage with technicians and musicians, and the big Moog plus 8 tracks of pre-recorded Moog sounds. With all of that, and an analog sequencer which could give some of the night and wind effects, we gave them a show. We had sound systems hanging on every one of the overhead beams, like 20 beams in the room had a sound system hanging on them in a cluster, and we could patch the sound through big joysticks to the sound system speaker that we wanted. We could do a motorcycle going left to right around the room done with one MiniMoog.

Sort of a predecessor to Quadraphonic or THX?

Yes, only it was across 25 speakers or whatever the number of beams were. The sound would go all the way around the room and you'd hear that motorcycle go around the room. We'd start a four cylinder sports car up, an MG, and it would go the other way. It would squeal the wheels through four speeds as it shifted gears and we'd do that with another two MiniMoogs. Then there'd be this horrendous screech of brakes, a crash, and a hubcap

rolled in the middle of the room. Then we'd start taking sound effects from the audience. We'd let them challenge us with any sound they wanted and we would attempt to perform it live. We'd paint a picture of sound: a horse running down a dirt road crossing a hard top. And you'd hear him run down the dirt road and he'd cross the hard top, then we'd change the filter and the timing. Then you'd hear the shorter sound as he went across the hard top. People would give us other things. The sound of a sewing machine or the sound of an animal, or the sound of a fictitious animal. "Let's invent an animal," I'd say. An animal with the sound of a wolf, but with the trumpeting of an elephant. We'd try and get the audience to tell us what they wanted us to do. If you've got the right rapport with your audience, and they've enjoyed the show enough, then they've sensed that there's some reasonable versatility. They will become a part of the show and you will get a few creative people out there that will work with you one-on-one. I would be able to, with a long distance shotgun microphone, aim it at someone and pick them up out of the audience and let them talk to us. We'd build this sound event and include that in every show.

I knew from those shows that thousands of kids, older adults, and senior adults, not to mention musicians, all wanted to buy one. Musicians came over from Europe and producers came down from New York. Then, one night, unbeknownst to my staff, my wife included, I got up in front of the audience at the end of the third show on a Friday night, threw my bow tie off (because I wore a tux) and with the spotlight on me said, "I wish to announce that you've just witnessed the last concert, the last presentation, of the Island of Electronicus. I intend to shut the Island down tonight. Tomorrow, we will pack the equipment, and I will take the MiniMoog to music stores worldwide." The next day in my new Cadillac hitched to a fiberglass trailer filled with Mini Moogs, I went on the road and stayed there until the trailer was empty. Then, I'd come home, wait for more MiniMoogs, pack the trailer, go back on the road, and (laughs) stay on the road. I was gone sometimes weeks at a time, sometimes eight or nine weeks selling the stupid MiniMoog (laughs more) which I loved. They were a fine part of my career and my life.

When we asked Bob Moog about Dick Hyman premiering the MiniMoog in Rochester, the story he told seemed so underwhelming, as though no one really noticed. I guess he didn't think that was a big deal at the time.

That seems to be Bob's attitude. He's never taken himself so serious as to create a problem, which is part of the benefit and the blessing of being a friend of Bob's through all these decades now. Bob and I are as close as brothers.

I can tell you a little side light of history that's very fascinating to me. One of my dearest friends in the electronic music world is Dr. Tom Rhea, at the Berklee School of Music. Tom is a special friend and a special man. We talk occasionally now and we're both aware of what the other is up to, but when we see each other it's as though we've never been apart. I remember when I first met Tom. Bob was flying out of Jacksonville and, as he left, he told me, "When you get to Nashville, look up Tom Rhea. He's important. He's written a dissertation and you need to get to know him." When I found Tom, he invited me to his home.

How did Bob know Tom Rhea?

They had met someplace and he had been referred to Tom by a guy who he met through Rick Powell who had done the first Moog Switched-On records from Nashville. Tom was just a young kid who had graduated with a doctorate degree. He was a couple of years younger than me.

What was his dissertation?

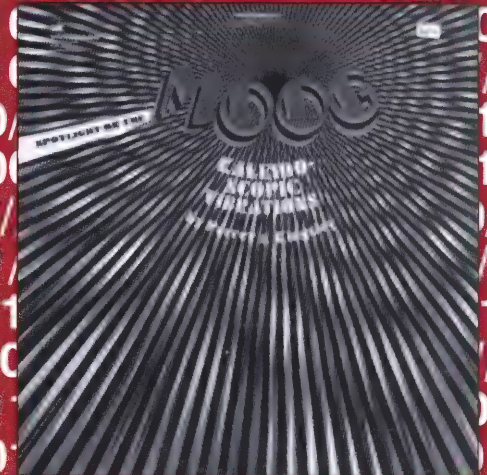
The History of Electronic Music in America. It was, and still is, a very important document. Tom said, "David, show me the MiniMoog. Bob says he's built it and shipped you some of them." I went to the car, rolled in my fiberglass case, opened it up, and Tom Rhea said to me, "It'll be nice...if they fix it. The keyboard is too small. It's not polyphonic. It doesn't have touch sensitivity. It hasn't got aftertouch." And he went down the list and gave me 25 or 30 things that was legitimately wrong with the MiniMoog and he said, "I am the expert. I just got my doctorate degree. This instrument is not complete. It is un-salable. It is un-useful. It cannot be used." And he upset me. I reached for my briefcase and pulled out four or five sales books and showed him how starting in St. Petersburg, a year ago, I'd been selling that MiniMoog all over the eastern United States and that every musician that had it, loved it. They were all satisfied customers. And Tom Rhea, the expert, who understood the development of the technologies, the chronology of musical evolution and how a musical instrument was supposed to evolve, to him this thing was an abortion. It was less-than. Later we hired him, and we knew that we had to absorb what he was saying into the design of future instruments because we needed him to help us define polyphony, the kind of presets that made sense for a musician. He's the brightest man I've ever known. He's one of the few intellectuals in my life. He's a man who I respected the day I met him, even though he turned out to be wrong and I couldn't follow him at that point. But to him then, it didn't have fundamental things that he thought it should have, and he was right from his perspective.

But that's the academic perspective.

That's right. Now, how many instruments have died that Tom has studied throughout his lifetime, before, and since then, because they only had that perspective? Moog has said that, "the MiniMoog would have died if it weren't for Vankoevering." He said that, because it took someone, and I happened to be at the right place at the right time, that had this conviction of applause, of laughter, and response from a show that was just a creative show in my judgment. I didn't think I was doing anything that was beyond what my father had done with hand bells! I just had a new technology and needed to show it off with the same excitement, depth, and character my Dad had done with all the stuff in our home that I'd grown up with. Only now, I had a bigger lump of clay. That's what the MiniMoog did.



minimoog



//////////TOP 10//////////moog records//////////

1) Dick Hyman: *The Age Of Electronicus*,
Command/ABC Records

2) Fred Wesley and the J.B.'s: "Blow Your Head", *Funky People*, Polydor Records

3) Jean Jacques Perrey: *Indigo*, Vanguard Records.

4) Dick Hyman: *The Electric Eclectics Of Dick Hyman*. Command/ABC Records

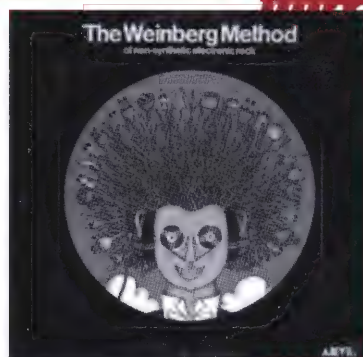
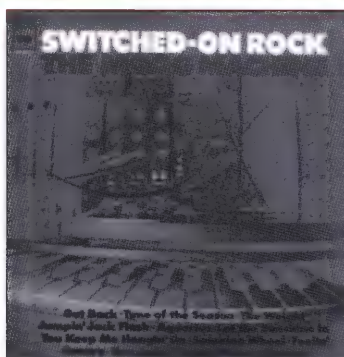
5) Claude Denjean and the Moog synthesizer: *Moog!* London Records

6) The Moog Machine: *Switched-On Rock* CBS Records

7) Fred Weinberg: *The Weinberg Method Of Non-Synthetic Rock*, Anvil Records

8) Perrey & Kingsley: *Spotlight On The Kaleidoscopic Vibrations* Vanguard Records

9) Pierre Henry: *Le Voyage*
Limelight/Mercury Records





don fleeming on the prolific career of walter sear

Walter Sear has enjoyed an extraordinary musical livelihood as a film composer, Theremin player, guitar synthesizer designer, author, tuba designer and player, session musician, studio owner and Moog recording artist, salesman and designer. In the early 1950s Sear built and used a Theremin for commercial recording work. This led to discussions about the instrument with Robert Moog a few years later, and in 1962 Sear became a R.A. Moog Theremin representative. In 1963 Sear invited Bob Moog to a showing of Theremins at a convention of the New York State School Music Association—among the schoolteach-

ers there was Herb Deutsch, a music instructor at Hofstra. In the next few months Deutsch and Moog collaborated on a tone generator that became the basic component for the modular analog synthesizer. By late 1964 word had spread that a strange new electronic device was coming out of Moog's upstate NY Theremin factory. As one of R. A. Moog's reps and design consultants, Sear helped put the Moog synthesizer on the map. Using his background as a Theremin and tuba salesman, Sear introduced the early models to many studios and artists.

Walter set up a showroom/studio at 115 West 57th at the Great Northern Hotel, renting space in the basement for showing tubas, and a 12' x 15' room on the 12th floor, thereafter know as Studio D. In the showroom, Sear would demonstrate the Moog and other electronic devices to artists and producers, and in his personal studio he produced commercials, film music, commissioned works, and his own music.

One day the Beach Boys dropped by to check out a Theremin, and Sear noticed that they had trouble keeping pitch on the difficult instrument. Discussions with the upstate crew led Moog to develop a small rectangular strip to be played with one finger which they called a "stringer." The Beach Boys first used it in the studio on 2-14-66 on "I Just Wasn't Made For These Times," which appeared on the *Pet Sounds* LP. This is said to be the first time a Theremin was used on a rock record. Just a few days later the device was being used again, on an early take of "Good Vibrations". The technically-challenged Mike Love can be seen using the "stringer" in 1960s-era concert footage.

Many early "Moog" LPs feature Sear's Moog programming and playing, including Dick Hyman's *The Age Of Electronics*, Marty Gold's *Moog Plays the Beatles*, and Richard Hayman's *Genuine Electric Latin Love Machine*. Simon and Garfunkel had Sear program and play the Moog for the LP *Bookends* in 1968. Check out the rippin' Moog riff that opens "Save the Life of My Child." This is probably the first use of the Moog with a major artist.

Sear released his own "Moog" record, *The Integrated Copper Plated Circuit* on ABC Record's Command Label. Released in 1969, it was recorded in Studio D and included six Sear original compositions and several cover tunes, including "Hey Jude" and "Revolution."

When Keith Emerson's manager, Tony Stratton-Smith, asked for a free Moog in early 1970, he was rebuffed by Sear, in the now infamous reply:

MOOGY: DE, DEE.
DE: YOUR SOUNDING GREAT.
DE: BYE, MOOGY.
[Pause]
DE: I'm sorry, but your letter of 7 January. The answer is the Moog Synthesizer and the possible use of "stringers".

We have never loaned instruments to groups for promotional use, first because the cost of the unit and secondly, because of the small size of our company. I would also be quite unfair to the groups (such as the Beatles, Stones, etc.) if I loaned them such expensive equipment.

A maintenance problem would be that some time and thinking is necessary before the Moog can be used. Although it is a keyboard instrument, various patch cord arrangements are needed before the instrument could produce any sound whatsoever.

I am extremely sorry I cannot give you an option to add a Moog synthesizer to the equipment of the Mice, we would make immediate delivery of the instrument if we could.

Thank you for your interest in the Moog Synthesizer. Should you or the group be in New York in the near future, please come up to the studio which I have which contains a collection of various electronic instruments.

WALTER SEAR, 115 West 57th St.

Sear's composition and Moog work found it's way into many mainstream films, including *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), *The Butterfly Affair* (1970), *Blue Water, White Death* (1971), and *Let's Scare Jessica to Death* (1971). He was also commissioned to produce Moog-driven commercials, including classic ones for Clairol, Pepto-Bismo, Chevrolet and IBM.

Since 1990, Sear has played Theremin and Moog on a number of records. The sessions include Dinosaur Jr., Juliana Hatfield, Ann Magnuson, Triplefastaction and the soundtrack for *Ed Wood*. Still active as a musician, equipment designer and studio owner (Sear Sound is one of the premier studios in NYC), Walter Sear is a unique man of our times, a person who helped shape the technology that has influenced the sound of music from the 1950s all the way through the 1990s.

DON FLEMING: The Theremins that were being built by Robert Moog and sold by you were considered a serious instrument, and quite often used to play classical music. When the Moog Synthesizer was first built, albums like *Switched-On Bach* seemed to be following in the classical footsteps. Were you surprised to see how the instrument was so taken in by the psychedelic rock generation?

WALTER SEAR: Not at all, we had no particular market in mind other than originally the high school science project market, that's where we really got started—class projects

for the science fairs and things like that. We didn't have the classical people in mind at all. Classical people would expect you to study an instrument for ten years. *Switched-On Bach* was just a classical approach to the instrument. Wendy Carlos, then Walter Carlos, was a very fine studio engineer who had the ability to program the Moog.

DF: As the NY rep for Moog you were able to witness the birth and early years of the modular analog synthesizer. Eventually the monstrous version of the Moog that we've all come to love was replaced by small versions with presets and limited options. Was this the natural evolution of the instrument or a reaction to the general public's inability to program the larger Moog?

WS: We were selling the largest Moog for \$6000. At that time you could buy a small house for that. They were very expensive. The inability of people to program and experiment with it was partially a surprise. We thought that the people that would be buying these things would have some technical background, but they really didn't, other than Walter Carlos. There were people who were buying the instrument with the age old quest of replacing musicians, and more often than not they would say "give me a violin" and I would say "well, hire one". So most people didn't think of it in terms of creating new sounds.

DF: *The Integrated Copper Plated Circuit* was released in 1969. Can you tell us about the making of that record?

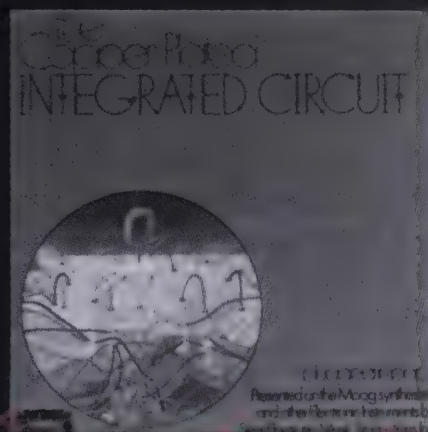
WS: It seemed like there was a need for some pure electronic music sounds, rather than fake piccolo trumpets and fake harpsichords. I had done an album with Richard Hayman [*Genuine Electric Latin Love Machine*] that finally got to the point where I was creating timbres and moods. That album, and particularly "The Windmills of Your Mind", the introduction of that really exploited the instrument to create interesting orchestral textures.

DF: I know that you were recently doing a Moog recording session with one of your old collaborators, Dick Hyman. Can you tell us a little about that?

WS: It's for the next Woody Allen film. Dick Hyman did a wonderful orchestration, and because of circumstances in the film of why and how this particular scene is happening, he needed to make it a little bit different and out of this world. It was sort of like riding a bicycle to work with Dick again: instantly the communication was there. He put me through my paces.

DF: There seems to be a revived interest in the Moog, with a new company producing all the original modular pieces. Plus, new and reissued Moog albums are popping up in record stores. Is there still life in the old beast?

WS: I think it is a valid musical instrument if it's treated as such. Unfortunately, like all other instruments, you've got to put in some time to learn its capabilities. The big enemy was always "make it sound like . . .". If your imagination and your ear tells you that it's not just a standard sound, then it's a marvelous instrument. **S**





audities recordings

THE ONLY WAREHOUSE SIZED, ONE-STOP-SHOPPING, FULLY FUNCTIONING VINTAGE KEYBOARD INSTRUMENT RECORDING STUDIO IN THE FREE WORLD.

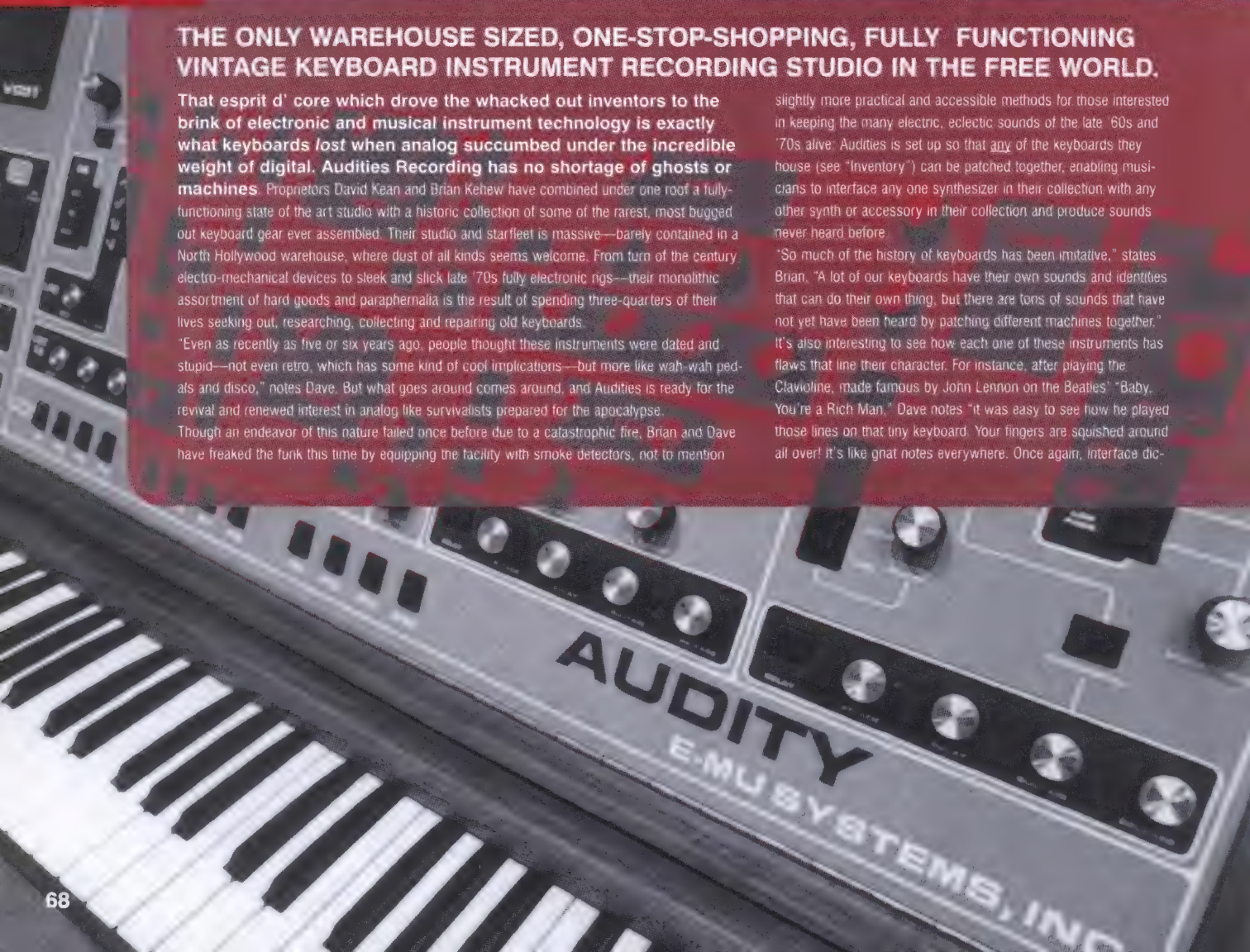
That esprit d'core which drove the whacked out inventors to the brink of electronic and musical instrument technology is exactly what keyboards lost when analog succumbed under the incredible weight of digital. Audities Recording has no shortage of ghosts or machines. Proprietors David Kean and Brian Kehew have combined under one roof a fully-functioning state of the art studio with a historic collection of some of the rarest, most bugged out keyboard gear ever assembled. Their studio and starfleet is massive—barely contained in a North Hollywood warehouse, where dust of all kinds seems welcome. From turn of the century electro-mechanical devices to sleek and slick late '70s fully electronic rigs—their monolithic assortment of hard goods and paraphernalia is the result of spending three-quarters of their lives seeking out, researching, collecting and repairing old keyboards.

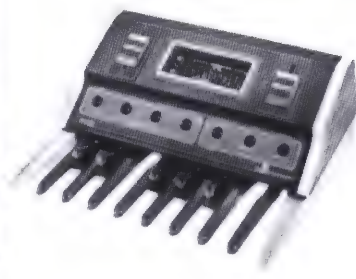
"Even as recently as five or six years ago, people thought these instruments were dated and stupid—not even retro, which has some kind of cool implications—but more like wah-wah pedals and disco," notes Dave. But what goes around comes around, and Audities is ready for the revival and renewed interest in analog like survivalists prepared for the apocalypse.

Though an endeavor of this nature failed once before due to a catastrophic fire, Brian and Dave have freaked the funk this time by equipping the facility with smoke detectors, not to mention

slightly more practical and accessible methods for those interested in keeping the many electric, eclectic sounds of the late '60s and '70s alive. Audities is set up so that any of the keyboards they house (see "Inventory") can be patched together, enabling musicians to interface any one synthesizer in their collection with any other synth or accessory in their collection and produce sounds never heard before.

"So much of the history of keyboards has been imitative," states Brian. "A lot of our keyboards have their own sounds and identities that can do their own thing, but there are tons of sounds that have not yet have been heard by patching different machines together." It's also interesting to see how each one of these instruments has flaws that line their character. For instance, after playing the Clavoline, made famous by John Lennon on the Beatles' "Baby, You're a Rich Man," Dave notes "it was easy to see how he played those lines on that tiny keyboard. Your fingers are squished around all over! It's like gnat notes everywhere. Once again, interface dic-





takes the approach an artist takes with the instrument." Even players that aren't as knowledgeable get a chance. "It's so amazing that the most mundane instruments get people excited all over again about it. If we had one keyboard that could do all this stuff, it wouldn't be that exciting. People get excited by different things—some gravitate towards different types of wood or blinking lights. Whatever excites people is half the fun of the studio." With interface and experimentation the doorway into the next level, Brian and Dave are open to using their facility as a sort of laboratory. In the hopes that Audites will become, like early electronic music studios, a place where new sounds which further the history of music spring forth from old technology. "We like happy accidents here," Dave, the fix-it guy, says. "There's no way to anticipate somebody's naiveté. An artist may walk in here and startle on an instrument in a different way and create some fairly exciting possibilities even though they're completely ignorant about the thing. They may plug something in and backwards and get the damndest results from things we never even thought of patching together." Purposely pushing the envelope with vintage technology will also require them to cross barriers never violated. "We have some very big and powerful computer systems (i.e. the Conté, whose chips were originally manufactured to test cat hearing — ed.) of which only one or two were ever made and originally cost forty, fifty, sixty, even seventy thousand dollars. We won't hesitate to run that into a wah-wah pedal then into a Marshall stack. The inventors would never think to do because their approach was too 'scholastic,'" Dave quips. "Plus, the audacity of that is just too attractive." —Steve Kretzsch

Audites is located at 11044 Burbank Blvd., Suite 200 North Hollywood, CA 91601.



The Analog Arsenal Partial Equipment List

Hammond Novachord Circa (c. 1937)

The first polyphonic synthesizer.

Hammond B-3, B-C, and C-V

The most common jazz organ, with same sound as the C3 but slightly more portable. Used by Jimmy Smith, Brother Jack McDuff, Gregg Allman, Steve Winwood, Young Rascals and Fleetwood Mac. C3 used by Deep Purple and Emerson, Lake and Palmer. The B-C is very rare and essentially has two B3's inside, so it sounds fat and chorused like two organs doubled.

Optigan (1971-73)

photo disc replay keyboard from Mattel technology. Used by Devo, Crowded House, The Eels, Aimee Mann.

Chamberlin M-1

Mellotron ancestor.

Mellotron Mk-II (c. 1964)

Big double keyboard units with 18 sets of sounds for each keyboard. Used on Beatles' "Strawberry Fields," "Flying," "Bungalow Bill," the Stones' "2000 Light Years from Home," Moody Blues' "Nights in White Satin" and "Tuesday Afternoon," Genesis's "Watcher of the Skies," King Crimson's "In the Court of the Crimson King," and Pink Floyd's *Saucerful of Secrets*.

Baldwin Electric Harpsichord (1967)

Used on Beatles' "Because" and Hendrix's "Burning Of the Midnight Lamp."

Honer D6 Clavinet (c. 1975)

Popular model as used by Billy Preston, Funkadelic, Stevie Wonder.

MiniMoog

Extremely popular synth used by Yes, ELP, Heart, Return to Forever, Mahavishnu Orchestra, Brian Eno, Herbie Hancock, George Duke, Jan Hammer, ELO, Wings and Gary Wright.

Micromoog

Late '70s, smaller version of the Multimoog, both of which were offered as a cheaper alternative to the MiniMoog, but with a few new features (i.e. ribbon control). Used by Money Mark. (pictured in battle on our cover)

Moog Sonic Six (1972)

Mostly used in schools. Thinner sound than the MiniMoog, but more sound creation options.

Moog Taurus I Bass Pedals

Very simple fat sounding bass pedals. As seen on stage with Rush, Genesis, Ritchie Blackmore and Yngwie.

Moog Modular Synthesizer

Very rare and coolest looking. Used by Wendy Carlos, Emerson, Lake and Palmer, Angel, Synergy, Tomita, Flood (the producer), Beaver and Krause, and Disneyland's Main Street Electrical Parade.

E-Mu Modular

Used for the synth sounds in *Apocalypse Now*.

E-Mu Audity (1979)

Emu's last attempt at analog synthesis, a polyphonic-programmable-modular idea. Bob Moog called it "the ultimate analog." Only one made which never sold at the list price of \$75,000. After no one ordered it at the NAMM convention, they designed the Emulator sampler on the car ride home. E-Mu, unlike everyone else, is still in business.

McLeyvier

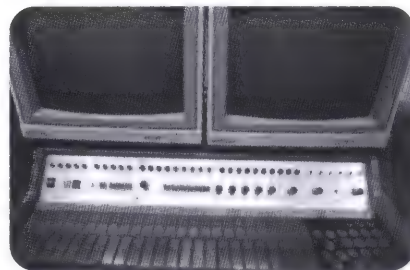
Serial #1 of only 8 units built. Keyboard they horked in *Strange Brew*, where it was used to control the hockey players.

ARP 2600

The *Penthouse* Magazine of Synthesizer Corporations.

EMS Synthi A/KS

The British MiniMoog. Used on Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* and "Welcome to the Machine," and the Who's "Won't Get Fooled Again." Excellent sound-processing capabilities.



Buchla 400, 200, and Touche

Oddest looking synthesizers without keys, but touch sensitive keypads. Don Buchla invented the first analog, modular music synthesizer (non-commercial) for San Francisco's Tape Music Center. The 400 is one of the most powerful and creative keyboards ever invented.

Polymoog

Classic sound on used by Gary Numan, Larry Fast, Rick Wakeman, and The Buggles.

Synergy

As used by Wendy Carlos.

Vako Orchestrion

Optical disc-based sampler keyboard with Mellotron-like sounds manufactured by Dave VanKoeveering's original company.

Roland Jupiter 8

Made famous and double platinum by Thomas Dolby, Toto, and Duran Duran.

ARP Odyssey

ARP's version of the MiniMoog.

ARP Pro Soloist

Immortalized by Genesis, Wings, and Billy Preston.

Clavioline

The double reed sound on Beatles' "Baby You're a Rich Man."

Hohner Pianet N

Zombies' "She's Not There" and Beatles, including "I Am the Walrus."

VOX Continental

B-52's and Elvis Costello, bright orange in the tradition of the New Wave.

Farfisa Combo Compact

Organ Sound of early Pink Floyd, Blondie and now Stereolab. Classic '60s organ. Big resurgence during the late '70s and '80s New Wave.

Wurlitzer Combo Organ

Versatile '60s transistor organ.

Audites also houses a variety of (pete) relic guitar amps and effects pedals.



The Moog Cookbook project is a 10-song onslaught of con-tempo-casual KROQ hits—Soundgarden, Weezer, Green Day, Lenny Kravitz, etc.—taken to the next level by electronic terrorists Brian Kehew and Roger Manning. Using a host of recording techniques—the cheesier, the better—the two locked themselves in a bedroom full of keyboards, drum machines, an 8-track mixer and a DAT. The result is a genius record in the classic Moog vein: conceptual, novelty, avant gardé and pop all at the same time.

Where did the idea to do Moog Cookbook come from?

Brian: Part of the concept was, we like the old Moog records of the '60s, especially where people didn't know how to work the synthesizers very well. They couldn't get a variety of sounds so they just got bad ones all the time. You can almost hear them learning to use the things—as they experimented with the keyboards, the sounds would change every verse. They had cheesy arrangements for session guys they would track down to play a drum chart or a guitar chart really quick. So we just

agreed to work fast and not change too much, and that would automatically retain some of the feel of those records. That's what I enjoyed most—we said, okay, let's do "Black Hole Sun," and go in, just learn it off the record, and put down a drum track—say, bossanova—for four minutes. Then put down a wet, thin sounding bass track. We'd just lay down more bad ideas until we were done. It wasn't hard to do. You could do a Wings song with two keyboards and a drum machine.

There's a lot of different styles on here, sometimes several in the same song.

Part of it's knowing what you want to do. I got my first copy, many many years ago, of *The In Sounds From Way Out*. They used to do a lot of tape chopping and splicing sounds together. In the *Teen Spirit*, there's a piece that's definitely Perry and Kingsley influenced. We'd play a part, punch in, then off, and on again. And ended up with a chopped up sound like they used to get. The part that sounds like Neil Young is us playing a guitar synth that's really bad, it can't track, so it glitches. Or for Tom Petty, I wanted to find a computer voice that could do the song with no melody. I wanted to do whole sentences on monotone robot voice. The Speak and Spell doesn't really do it, so I took my ARP, ran it through what we call a Framptone, you know the mouth tube? Roger was not able to breath in the studio, when we did it, he was laughing so hard.

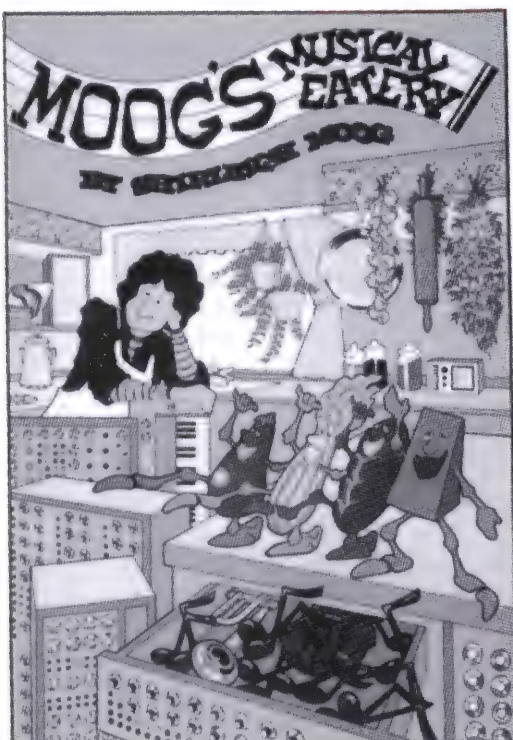
This has put you in a special group of musicians who put out a record with "Moog" in the title.

We don't really have an aesthetic that old, or Moog, is better. They certainly do some things quick and easy, which we wanted to do. I mean, we like these things, but a lot of old analog synthesizers aren't that great—they're a pain in the butt sometimes. We just like keyboards. We have a lot of digital keyboard in there, for instance. We use whatever sounds good for a particular part—organs, pianos, drum machines. With the analog keyboards, it's like finger painting—even if you know what you're doing, you can just start paying attention to turning knobs and not playing. It's very much like a paint-by-numbers kind of fun.

Like going from a recipe?

Yeah.

Skarfing Material



In 1978, Shirleigh Moog, Bob's wife, began publishing a cookbook. *Moog's Musical Eatery* is packed with family recipes and advice on preparing, serving and hosting guests, planning picnics and more. The anecdotes she starts out each recipe with often involve famous musicians dropping by for dinner—just as many of the meals are heavy-duty, hardcore cholesterol laden fare. Here is a recipe which brings the best of both worlds together.

ROASTED GAME HENS WITH CHEESE AND SAUSAGE STUFFING

The electronic composer, John Eaton, is a red-haired, plump cherub of a man—who loves food. He waxes ecstatic over a dish he likes. When he was served roasted game hen, he called it "the left breast of Aphrodite." I also served this dish on another occasion, to Walter Carlos and Keith Emerson. They are both slim people and very particular eaters. They both loved it, and expressed surprise that they were able to finish.

- Two rock Cornish game hens
- One cup grated parmesan cheese
- One egg
- One finely chopped sprig of parsley
- One minced garlic clove
- Half pound ground veal or pork, fried
- 1/2 t salt
- 1/4 t ground pepper

- 1 Combine all ingredients except the hens and mix thoroughly.
- 2 Stuff the hens with the mixture and secure the openings with poultry pins.
- 3 Rub the hens with bacon fat.
- 4 Roast at 325° for one hour for a one pound bird. For a one and half pound bird, and hour and 15 minutes will be necessary. Baste the hens with the pan juices frequently.

TO SERVE

Cut the hens in half and arrange attractively on a platter. If you want a delicate gravy, thicken the pan juices with a little flour. A cooked green vegetable, salad and white wine are naturals for this meal.

A whole roasting chicken may take the place of the hens, but the presentation is not quite so festive. If you do substitute the roasting chicken, you will have to cook the bird longer than the time specified above.

Serves four.

C I O U S 9

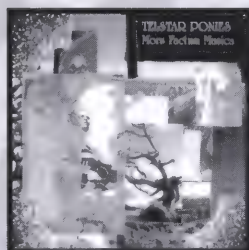
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TELSTAR PONIES Mors Factum Musica

First ever US release from highly acclaimed Scottish 'out-rock' band featuring Brendan O'Hare (ex-Teenage Fanclub).

"A staggering triumph for guitar rock" - **Melody Maker**



SWISH SUPERMAX

Seven dark and sinister yet dreamy soundscapes from this trio featuring Murph (Dinosaur Jr.), Joe Boyle, and Lori Martin (ex-Helium). Produced by Don Fleming.



DON FLEMING Because Tomorrow Comes

Welcome to 'Donaldtronics', a three part excursion thru sonic frontiers with vocals, theremin, guitar and effects. From ex-Gumball frontman and producer of luminaries like Hole, Sonic Youth, Dinosaur Jr. and Screaming Trees.



STEEL MINERS ALL HOPPED UP

Check out this heavy hittin' EP of freak boy rock from Pittsburgh's finest!

"Butt kicking fast punk...great shit here." - **Flipside**

"Definitely something to play over and over again." - **Lollipop**

MANUFACTURED, MARKED AND DISTRIBUTED BY CAROLINE RECORDS, 104 WEST 29TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10001 (212) 886-7500

Keyboard Money Mark

INTERVIEW BY STEVE KNEZEVICH WITH COLOR COMMENTARY AND PHOTOS BY SEAN MORTENSEN

Out Standing in His Field

MARK'S THE ILL MOTHERFUCKER FROM GARDENA WHO'S HOOKED UP EVERYONE FROM YOKO ONO AND PERRY FARRELL TO THE BLUES EXPLOSION AND BECK, MARK RAMOS NISHITA HAS MANAGED IN THE PAST FEW YEARS TO CONCRETEZIE HIMSELF AS THE DEFINITIVE KEYBOARD PLAYER OF A CERTAIN CATALOG OF 1990s POST-CHECK YOUR HEAD INSPIRED MUSIC. BY IMPLEMENTING A TECHNIQUE THAT SOMETIMES PRECEDES HIS BETTER JUDGMENT—STRICT IMPROVISATION.

FOR SOMEONE WHO PLAYS AS OFTEN AND AS FREELY AS HE DOES, HIS UK DEBUT RELEASE *MARK'S KEYBOARD REPAIR*, NOW AVAILABLE STATESIDE AS WELL AS ON VINYL FROM YOUR OWN FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD RECORD LABEL, PLACES HIM AMONG THE ELITE, ABOVE AND BEYOND INTO ANOTHER REALM OF KEYBOARD PLAYERS. HIS MUSIC IS VERSATILE AND VOLATILE, COMPLETELY FOCUSED, YET ALL OVER THE PLACE, AND THOUGH IT'S SIMILAR TO HIS WORK WITH OTHER PEOPLE, HIS PLAYING ON *KEYBOARD REPAIR* RUNS DEEPER IN ITS CONVICTIONS. HIS HOME STUDIO FILLED WITH KEYBOARDS AND SYNTHESIZERS—MOST WHICH SEEM AVAILABLE ONLY THROUGH THE SMITHSONIAN—ARE THE EVERYDAY TOOLS NECESSARY FOR MARK TO PRODUCE THE GENETIC VARIANTS OF MUSIC HE COMPOSES.

Without even knowing it, Mark may have accidentally stumbled on the sound of his generation: a mixture of noise, funk, jazz, hip-hop, folk, Afro-Cuban, and Latin. *Grand Royal* caught up with him and slowed him down for a second, but it soon became evident Mark never stops, never stops for anyone.

Who were your early influences on keyboard?

Billy Preston. Keith Emerson. Not really, though. I didn't really collect a lot of records when I was young. I liked Elton John, because I could play a lot of his songs.

It's almost as though you're influenced by everyone.

Yeah, by anything I hear.

Do you remember the first keyboard was that you had to save money up for?

It was a Rhodes, a Fender Rhodes. My Dad bought it for me.

Sean: So what's up with Lee Perry? I got along with Lee Perry. When [the Beastie Boys] first got over to Japan, we went to this club and Lee was giving a speech. It was an off night and over the next couple of days we were going to do some shows with him. We met at this outdoor café in the middle of these buildings. A little escape, kind of a cool area, a little haven in the middle of the city. When we walked into the patio area, everyone was listening to him speak...

Who was 'we'?

Anyone who was around. His entourage, his musicians, the Beastie Boys, our road manager, and just some local people that hang out at this place. He was busting all his rhymes and shit. It was pretty dope. He started mixing it in with some of...whatever his religion is...you know. I haven't figured it out yet.

It's a mix of some kind of perverted Christianity. Something like that.

[laughing] It's not Catholic Buddhism...he's...something else. He was saying "I hear God," or something like that.

Were people challenging him [Lee Perry] or talking back to him?

No, I was the only one that spoke up. Then it turned out that we hung out.

What did you say?

I said, 'Yo man, I respect all your shit, but I haven't decided who my God is gonna be, so...'

Sean: So "step off"...

I didn't say step off...

Sean: 'Step off my altar Lee Perry.'

I just said, 'Yo man, I gotta split. I gotta go to sleep. I'll talk with you tomorrow.' Then he was really cool about it. He told me that I had a "kiddy mind." That I think like a kid. I

think people were relieved that I stopped him, because they wanted to, like, take the next bite of their soup. [laughter] He wasn't letting them. He was cool, man. He has a lot of knowledge and musical energy, constantly. He's got a video camera all the time. He videotapes everything.

Did he ever see the second issue of the magazine?

He has seen the magazine.

Did you ever get any feedback about that?

I think he was proud of himself. There were a lot of young people around

The waitress comes and brings our food, sooner than we expect. Small talk ensues. Mark is overly polite, as though he's been in this situation many times before on the road. A few pieces of pie are ordered, and a chicken sandwich. Mark starts into his Dutch Apple pie.

This is not my normal diet either. I'm going out on a limb for you guys. I'm eating a little sugar now, so that I can tap into my deep consciousness.

You don't eat any processed sugar or flour?

I do, but I try not to.

You stay away from meat?

I just eat deliberately and consciously. For instance, I know I'm eating this bullshit pie right now, and I'm cool about it, man. I try and stay away from meat. There's a lot of crazy shit in that food.

Sean: It's true.

On tour the live act is so energetic that you almost have to keep yourself up physically to pull that all off.

Maybe those guys [Beastie Boys], but I'm not on the stage as long as those guys.

You're known for your stage gymnastics though.

Yeah, I get to get psyched up for a whole day, and then do it one time. Then get my check, cash it, and have a drink. [laughter] The performing chicken on the back of the ['Mo Wax 10-inch] record is me. I'm in a little box. Money comes down the slot, a light comes on, then the show begins. I start picking at the keys on the little piano. After I finish doing that a few times—it doesn't matter what I play, right?—then the food comes down that little chute.

That's not how you feel about your own stuff though, like *Mark's Keyboard Repair*?

When you're on tour into around the 300th show, you feel like that. I don't know when it happens, at the 200th show, or after a few.

When you first started playing with the Beastie Boys, like at the Universal Amphitheater show—the last show of *Check Your Head*—I think you even did a flip off your keyboard.

I think I fell on my ass, to be honest. [laughter] No, I did. There was a wet spot. I jumped and I fell on my ass. I slipped, and had to play it off. It had to get ill-er than that, so I could play that off. At the 300th show it's more about who can be the most chill.

What's the plan now? The band is just going to stay in and record?

It's hibernation now, so to speak. There's the three stages: the illumination stage, the recording and putting the shit together, then translating it into a live thing. It goes around in circles. I'm bored with it, really.

What stage do you think they're in now, pre-illumination?

They're getting ready. Illuminating, gearing up to record, and make some more music history.

Sean: Some decisions.

You're gonna be part of that? That process?

We'll see what happens. I couldn't say yes or no. I may not be alive tomorrow.

I mean, if everything goes well?

My plan is really just whatever happens. There may be some conflicts. I could see a couple of them. I'm going to be doing some live shows.

You've been recording with some other people lately?

I recorded with the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion. I'm on three or four songs. That was cool. I played the Hammond porta-B.

What about Porno for Pyros?

We recorded this Lou Reed song "Satellite of Love."

Mario told me about that. How did that turn out?

I have not heard it. I did the session, and didn't stick around for all the listenings. I would've if I had time. I guess it came out all right. They were happy with it.

Do you like playing with other people?

When you're recording it's not like you're *really* playing with other people. It's like you're getting along just for that moment. It's all right, not necessarily my favorite thing to do right now.

Is there any moment when it is kind of fun, or relates to more what you want to do?

When I grew up music wasn't a job for me to do. It was when it happened: jamming, improvising, impromptu at a party. Come over at 9:00 and bring your guitar.

Where did you learn the keyboard?

I went to Rock and Roll High School. I ditched high school and signed up for Rock and Roll High School. Bought some records and a turntable.

You never had any formal training?

No, not really.

Could you write any charts for your stuff? Is that something you're interested in trying to do—formal composition for bigger orchestrations?

Nope, not really. I *could*, but what I normally do now, the methodology, is I basically improvise. The tape is running and I listen back to what I'm doing. What you're saying is that instead you start with an idea/concept, it's a little more preconceived, then you make a rough diagram of it, and give it to other musicians, right?

Right.

For me the music is born out of action. I don't really separate those two things. I think that other kind of music making is luxurious. It's a little elite. You're in a position of power over other musicians and you give them instructions and what not. I don't really deal with that.

I'm just wondering if you're interested in working with other musicians, say like a string section or something?

I would, but in that case the power would be in the money. I would have to be able to afford it.

You're right.

In my mind, it's all connected: life, the music, art. It's all connected.

How do you keep—this is really a much bigger question—the desire to improv flowing?

You seem to be working constantly.

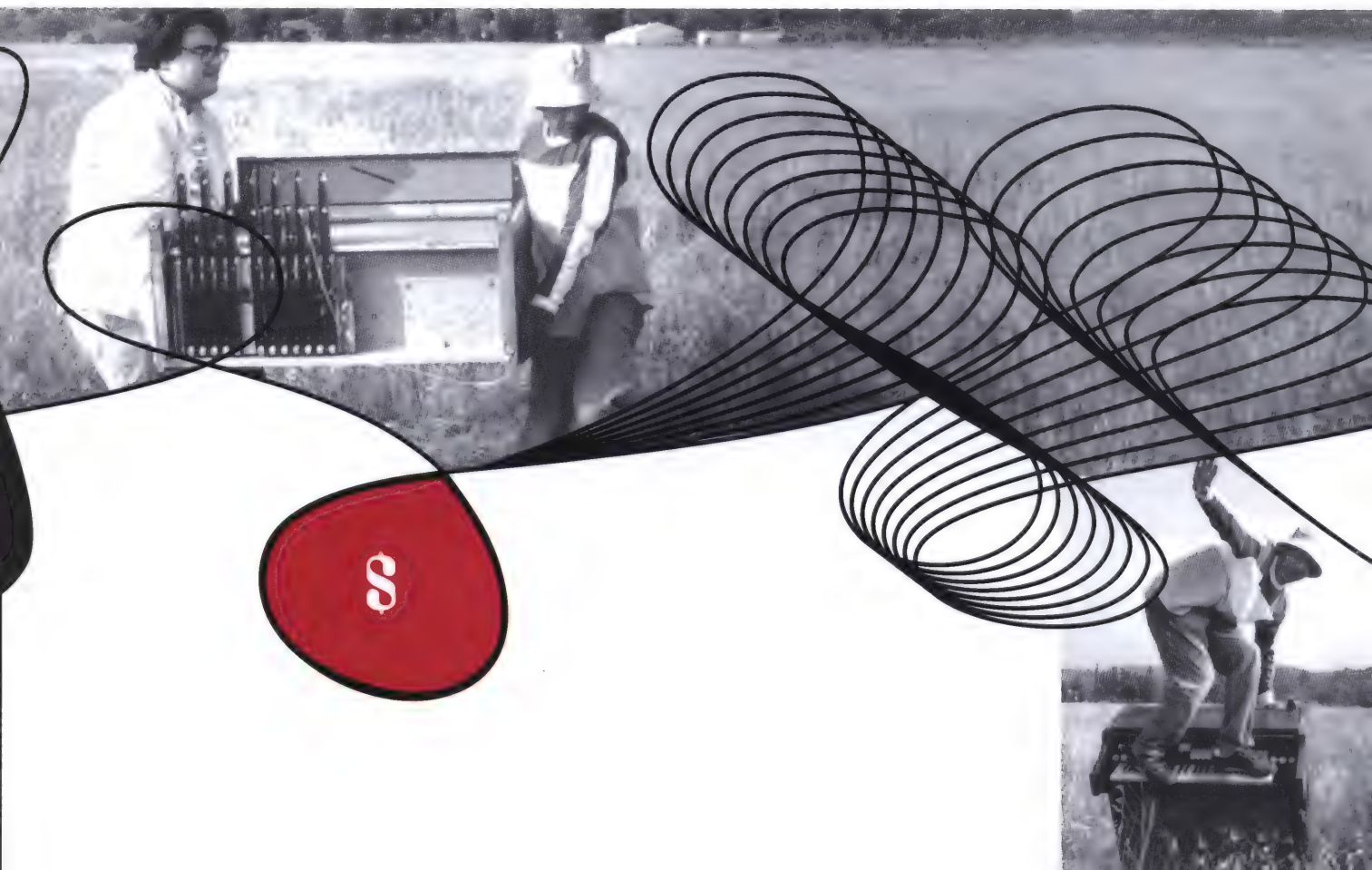
It's like exercising, you just keep doing it. Most of the time you're not running in races, but you're training for the race. Then, when the race comes, it's like 'what the hell is the fucking race?' You run your fastest, in that moment, but normally you're trying to run the fastest you can. I see it like I'm always in training. They used to say that about Coltrane, always practicing on stage. That's how I feel about it too. No musical moments are any different from any other musical moments. In one way there's some text involved, because there's lyricism in my music. In another way there's some instrumentals. In Japan, that's why Richard Pryor or Lenny Bruce aren't as popular. Because the text that's involved. Instead music becomes popular. The Beastie Boys are popular in Japan, but they have so many lyrics in some of their songs that the Japanese hear just for the aural experience. With someone like Lenny Bruce the meaning is embodied in the content and in how he says it as well. I'm still trying to figure all that out. It helps me create because it helps me root myself in what sound is and what it's functions are. One person said my record is really good for cleaning the house and washing dishes. I think it's a function of the music. That's why people leave the TV on and go about their business. They're not really hearing the text, it's just massaging their subconscious. If I'm going to talk about *my* record, that what it does for me. It kind of massages my subconscious. It's not right here—in your face—it's somewhere else. You gotta either look for it, or just let it happen. When I'm making the music I just try to catch on tape what I'm improvising. I don't think I've ever written a song in my head and then wrote it down.

Sean: I think that's what's nice about your music. It's one of those things where people sit there and get involved in the conversation, and then after a while ask *who is this...*?

I'd say my record is great for headphones. I call it headphone music. Bedroom or headphone music...something private you'd wear headphones for. It's trickier. What you hear on the record is just straight, what I did through time.

You always have the tape running?

Yeah. When I'm performing, I think that the audience is on the stage and I'm another audience member. There's no stage, really. I'm just there having a conversation, just like other people in the back are saying, "Have you seen my new car?" They're doing their little thing, and I'm just in my space.



Are you very well read? Do you read a lot?

Well, I'm only beginning to read *Gravity's Rainbow*. I'm behind as far as that's concerned. I was doing music, and now I have time to catch up.

Mark converses with the waitress and compliments her on the pie, which she claims she made herself. No one believes her.

I like John Cage's writing. I had in my hip pocket, when I was in high school, that book *Tarantula* by Bob Dylan. Later, I read *Catcher in the Rye* before it became the most famous in rock for a while, in that weird way. That kind of moved me too, the whole John Lennon experience.

Was he a big influence?

Early, yeah.

The Beatles stuff or after?

I think the Beatles stuff, but mostly after.

What about The Plastic Ono Band?

Sure, then the Velvet Underground. Wait, we were talking about writing. There was a lot of books associated with those people. John Lennon actually did some writing, right? Yeah, he did books of drawings and poems, I think.

Sketchy books.

Do you find a different kind of inspiration from writing than from music?

TV was the biggest influence, probably. A lot of people would say that.

In what way?

Just feeling that I'm as old as TV and evolved with it. I have this weird relationship with TV. I don't let it do things to me because I know it so well. It's like knowing someone so well that you know what their bad parts are, and you know to stay away from them.

TV almost has a rhythm to it.

Programming. It's all an imaginary world. It's all just colors. Even in the city, it's just an imaginary world. The street goes like that and the trees are planted like that. You hardly see anything that was just there originally, it's just put there. Sean: Like an illusion.

To me, TV is like the biggest illusion.

Music is in a different category?

Unrecorded music—live music—is the shit.

I don't see how separating music from life can really exist, even if it's recorded. In my improvisational context, I'd just go forever. For as many words as I just said now they would be notes, or some passage.

Do you have any plans to do writing of your own in book form or stories?

Yeah, I'm constantly kind of doing that. There's this book I was going to write with Bob Mack called *The Science of Driving*. It involved a lot of things beyond just driving. Dreams. Dreaming of getting into a car wreck. Before cars, people didn't dream about getting into a car wreck.

There's a J.G. Ballard book called *Crash* about the eroticism of car crashes. It's gonna be a movie by David Cronenberg soon.

See, you guys gotta tell me about these books.

I assume you have quite a bit to say about the commerce of music, reflecting back as someone who's participated in that system.

Basically I'm confused about it.

I feel I'm more akin to that original thinker than I am to myself now. I am this musician, that's why I kind of vow to

do things live on the tape, for now. It's the machine, the invention of that machine, that made the difference. Nowadays things are invented with an intention of making a profit. They're not just invented for the sake of inventing.

Do you do inventing of your own?

A little bit.

Is there anything that carries the Mark Nishita patent?

No. I haven't made a pure invention yet, but I've done some improvements that are close to inventions.

Home improvements?

I've done some keyboard improvements.

Do you feel confident enough to go against Bob Vila?

Not in house building. Instrument making? No, not even. He's a professional at what he does.

Are there any improvements on keyboards or anything that you're proud of?

Mostly it's all on paper. We can't talk about it now, because of some impending legal things. I don't really talk about inventions too much being that there are people around quick to the hint.

Your carpentry is quite famous.

It used to be, but I don't do much of it anymore. Do you guys wanna cruise back?

We pay the bill, and tip appropriately. After goofing off taking pictures in front of the restaurant, which carries the 'Westward Ho!' theme a bit too far in our collective opinion, we head toward the Nishita complex in a Gold minivan, rented, which he's been driving around since he got back from touring.

I got a program from one of the games [which I worked as a ball boy] that advertises NBA tennis shoes. They had a shoe that said 'NBA' on the side.

Made out of basketballs?

Basketball shoes.

Sean: What was this in?

Lakers Illustrated. They have these dope basketball shoes.

The renovations at the G-Son aren't going to intrude on the Atwater Basketball Association are they?

Maybe slightly. The basketball league is really dictated by what the pharmacy downstairs thinks about it. They have their little pill bottles falling off the shelves every time you slam dunk.

Sean picks a brochure for up off the floor of the van and seems entranced by the subject matter; portable housing for nomadic living.

Sean: These are nice.

Another thing I'm doing right now, I'm getting into these yurts. I'm going to build these two alternative living spaces on my property. I'm going to build this yurt and this other dome out of bricks.

Sean: Like a sweat box?

No, more like an outside living area.

Do these come in kits?

Yeah, I'm either going to build it from scratch or buy one of their kits.

That one out in the snow is pretty dope.

I have a pamphlet at home. I'm really psyched about that dome.

This brochure looks like old Playboy layouts for futuristic houses.

Like Wilt Chamberlain's house. I remember when Wilt Chamberlain was building his house, everything was extra big. That's like at the Magic Johnson theater. They have extra big seats to fit his body, probably one of the best theaters I've been to because it's so comfortable [noticing Mark's velcro Playboy sneakers]. Say, did you get those shoes out here?

No, on the road, when I was traveling. I do a lot of collecting, like portable turntables.

Sean: How many do you have?

Ten or so, some get stolen. I have four of them at the house now, but they didn't steal my dope one.

Sean: Did someone break into your house?

No, it happens from moving, letting people borrow them.

This doesn't seem like a high crime area.

Maybe some, not really where I live.

It seems like the isolation out here gives you a certain kind of peace.

It does, but if you talk about pure silence, I don't get it. I get a romantic kind of silence. I'll hear animals at night having sex. Birds, walking through the grass. In the city you hear cars a lot of the time. Machines.

Helicopters.

Helicopters. At certain times when you hear a car go by out here and it's eerie.

Do any of the musicians that you work with come out here?

No, the only people I had out here were the guys from 'Mo Wax and Kan from Major Force.

Sean: Do you have anything to do with Kan's new stuff?

I don't know, maybe. I'm not really that protective about the stuff I play.

Do you think it's better that way?

It's definitely better for me. I improvise, so...I get until I die.

Sort of an unlimited resources.

Maybe. I find, when I get tired, that I repeat myself. I struggle through it, trying to make something new. That's what I like about playing.

Did you request not to have any recording notes on Mark's Keyboard Repair?

I don't want anyone not to know. I know people are interested in the techniques and how things are done. In fact, that's the question most often asked, "Who's playing on the record?" More or less, I'm playing all the instruments.

Does anyone else play on the record?

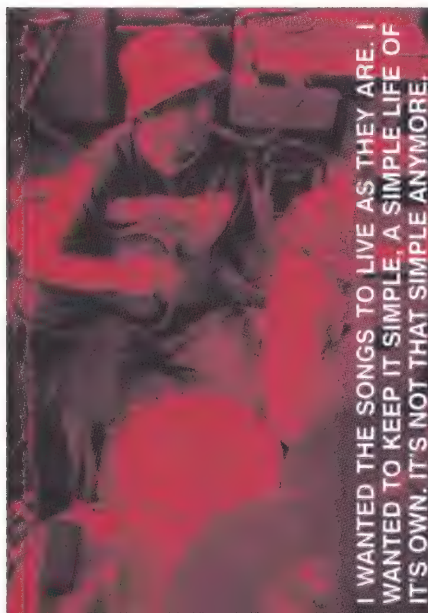
My brother might play a little drums with one of his friends. They were fucking around on the drum kit and the tape was on. I found the tape later, so I hooked it up. I thought it was me playing and only later I found out it was him. That was the only time. It's not important, really.

It gives the record a more enigmatic quality, though. Adds to the mystery. Not that you're trying to hide anything, but it was created in a unique way.

Well James [Lavell, of 'Mo Wax] got ahold of it I didn't want that to be a marketing thing. I wanted the songs to live as they are. I wanted to keep it simple, a simple life of it's own. It's not that simple anymore. ☹



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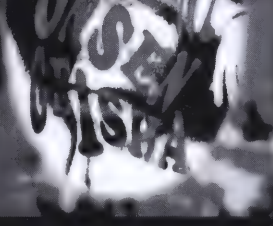
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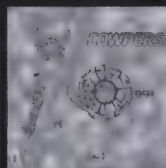
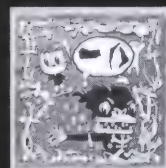
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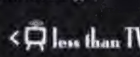
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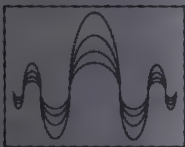
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THE NEW ENGLAND SYNTH MUSEUM

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It's late in the year and my right-hand man Branko and I are in dire need of some excitement. We're both 'in search of' (L. Nimoy reference) one of those "Calgon™ take me away" experiences. You must understand, where we're from there are only a few options for travel:

1. The 'syringe sewer' otherwise known as the Jersey shore.
2. Aruba.
3. Florida, to stay with your grandparents (or at least next door to someones').

These locales are all fine if your fetishes are shuffle-board and suntanned mustaches. Unfortunately for Branko and I we were not down with the whole George Hamilton look. So instead we opted for Canada. Neither of us had ever been there and since it is another country it seemed mildly exotic.

Canada turned out to be OK. There were a few wild moments, but maybe not enough. Our most interesting bragging right was to say we hung out at some cafe whose French name translated to *The Electric Buttocks*. You must know that at this point in my life I was mad for collecting old and crazy synthesizers. I dreamed, like any decent music/pawn shop hunter should, about being in a strange and hopefully naive country and finding some ridiculous deal on an old, huge modular system or something like that. Anyhow, while in Canada the closest I came to a good deal was an overpriced and broken set of Moog Taurus bass pedals that Geddy Lee supposedly once used.

So after a couple of days of northern hospitality, Branko and I split from Montreal and started heading towards

Boston where we planned to stay with my brother. At this point we were ahead of our own schedule. So we had to find a way to kill a day and a half. Like any good synth hunter I always carry around a copy of Mark Vail's *Vintage Synthesizers* book. In the rear index I had noticed this place called The New England Synthesizer Museum. It was located right on the way to Boston, so I talked Branko into finding a hotel nearby its location in Nashua, New Hampshire and then going to the museum with me the next morning. I was totally psyched.

While on the road I decided to give the museum a call just to check their message to make sure it would be open the next day. I didn't expect anyone to be there since it was about 10:00pm, but someone actually answered when I called. It turned out to be the museum's proprietor, David. He was so completely excited that we were interested in going to the museum that he dropped the phone about seven times during the course of our brief conversation. He also kept repeating himself "Ooooh, you're coming. Ooooh, you're coming." Otherwise he seemed nice enough during the call and when I asked if there were any hotels nearby he demanded (and I mean *demanded*) that we stay in a private apartment which he owned that was adjacent to the museum but was currently unoccupied although normally was rented out. He then gave me directions and as I ended the call I made sure this wasn't too much of an inconvenience for him since we wouldn't be arriving into Nashua until nearly 1:00am. David assured me "If I'm awake when you arrive I'll answer the door, but if I'm asleep when you arrive I'll still answer the door. I just won't smell very good." With those as his final words he hung up on me with no other farewell. Branko and I were on our way.

On the ride to the museum I totally felt as if it was bar mitzvah day. It seemed like a dream come true. I had these visions of sleeping within a pyramid of analog keyboards, among banks of flashing lights with a low frequency oscillator droning out a triangle wave and making the room rumble with a sub-harmonic frequency. Well, at about 1:30am we ended up pulling into the museum's parking lot which turned out to be an old house in a middle class suburban woodsy neighborhood. As we were pulling into the driveway we noticed a beat up '88 Chevy Cavalier with huge white block letters in its back window which says *MOOG MUSIC 1964-1994*.

Branko and I both imagined David to be some tall thirtysomething bearded, relaxed, cliched intellectual pro-

fessor type. We were each surprised to find a short and ageless round man. Everything about him was round: His hairless head, his stomach, his eye glasses, and even his odd peg-legged jeans. He wore a strange multi-patterned sweater that was made of a material reminiscent of a diaper. He had a very unique mustache as well. We could hear in the background he was watching *Star Trek*, which didn't seem too shocking. David seemed a bit uncomfortable and barely spoke to us. When he did talk he had this crazy nasal whine which at first was totally indecipherable. It really sounded like one of the inarticulate adults from the Charlie Brown Halloween special. Either that or he was going through some intense real-time vocoding. We also noticed he would absolutely not look either of us directly in the eye, which was really eerie. He led us to the empty 'apartment' which adjoined the house, and told us he'd wake us in the morning for the museum tour. Branko and I slept on the hardwood floor, which had remnants of stale cat urine in the cracks of the wood. Later, we both admitted to have had an odd sensation that we were being watched through the walls.

As a side note I should mention that in the middle of the night we were awakened by a horrible shriek out-





The New England Synthesizer Museum
David Wilson
6 Vernon St. Nashua, NH 03060-2672
603.881.8587



side. When we looked out we saw something running through the woods towards our window. As it got closer to us it became less of a blur and took more of its own huge shape. It was hairy as hell and ran with this crazy elegant sprint and I still swear to this day it was a Sasquatch.

David woke us at about 7:00am. He said he needed to get a head start so he could still get to his other job after our tour, since we were the museum's only appointment for the day. He took us to IHOP and he began bragging to us about how he started the museum and acquired some of his rarer synthesizers. During the entire meal David wouldn't look either of us in the eye and he kept complaining about the crack in his coffee mug. It was during breakfast that we noticed he had an awful cold. He was continually sniffing and sneezing wildly as we ate. There would repeatedly be this look of terror on his face as he reached for his yellowed handkerchief, but every time he went for it he grabbed it just a moment too late and he would end up spraying all over our meals. His conversational manner came off like he was a computer genius, but from the '70s, sort of held up in time and still fond of his Radio Shack TRS-80. Branko was terrified by him. Which left me to do most of the talking.

We finally got back to his house to see the museum. As we walked up to the side door I began to get really excited. I was expecting walls of shelves with old ARPs and Sequentials. Possibly a MiniMoog on a plaster pedestal. Or maybe a Roland TB-303 in a glass case. I was mildly shocked when the door opened to see just piles of junk

everywhere. David assured us the museum was upstairs. He led us what was about ten feet to the stairwell, but this took a careful 15 minutes to do because we had to wade through waist high piles of bunk on the floor. **I've never seen so much miscellaneous shit piled in one place.** There's keyboard magazines from 1983 mixed with pizza boxes from about 1984. Garbage bags next to mountains of videotapes with cat food littered everywhere. I assumed the museum itself would be a bit more kempt, I was wrong. The first room we walked into had half of the walls peeling apart. There were keyboards there at least, but they were everywhere. There was no order or dichotomy to his system. Just synthesizers and sequencers scattered all over the floor, Memorymoogs turned upside down, opened Korgs separated on the ground. Keyboards laying on top of each other, pushed against the wall, some on the window sill. It was completely insane. If anything it was more like a mausoleum than a museum. For almost four hours he led us from room to room explaining in detail just how he found each and every individual one. He boasted of being able to build any power supply he ever needed. All the while sneezing and hacking up phlegm all over the place.

The decor was fascinating. Some rooms had exposed insulation swinging from the torn ceiling. Others had paint and wallpaper chipping away like wet newspaper, and all had exposed wiring and faulty outlets. I noticed when he talked about the museum he kept referring proudly about "we". Such as "we acquired this" or "we're in the process of fixing that", but it was obvious it was all just him.

David would then pick a synth off the floor, dust it off and turn it on and subject us to half hour serenades, continually sneezing and choking on his flu while playing extremely unpracticed versions of prog-rock hits, favoring such classics as Emerson, Lake, and Palmer. All the while muttering to himself "Oh, I haven't done this one recently." Branko and I were also fortunate enough to jokingly ask for and then surprisingly receive impromptu versions of the themes from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *Star Wars*.

Don't get me wrong, David has some amazing gear up there. It is quite a collection and he even admitted to not having time to have tried everything out. While we were there we putzed around with his huge Arp 2500 and Aries modular systems. We saw lots of weird EML stuff, tons of Moogs, Yamahas, Electric Dream Plants, and Oberheims. For any gearhead it was a dream, but by the time it was all over I was more fascinated by the man and his technicolor mustache than the equipment he carried. On the way out we signed his guest register and noticed that the last people attended about six months prior to us.

Upon leaving, Branko and I both felt as if we had made a new and interesting friend, and even though we both inevitably ended up catching David's cold, it didn't really bother us. It seemed like a small price to pay for our amazing new discovery, the New England Synthesizer Museum. To say the least, it is a museum unlike most. In fact, it is really most unlike a museum. ☹



Herschel Gaer directs music videos and sings and plays bass for the brilliant pop band, The Interpreters.

how to

A PROFESSIONAL'S THEREMIN

by ian c. rogers and the grand royal hobby squad
photos: blumple shewchuck

"The Theremin, and Leon Theremin's work in general, is the biggest, fattest, most important cornerstone of the whole electronic music medium." —Robert Moog

You've heard a Theremin. You probably didn't know it at the time, but you certainly have. Perhaps in a science fiction, horror, or suspense film, or a television show theme. Perhaps even as a novelty in the song of anyone from The Beach Boys to Jon Spencer Blues Explosion. Had you thought twice about it, you'd have guessed it the sound of a cello or a violin.

But the Theremin is not a stringed instrument. It's entirely electronic. And to play it, you don't even touch it. A Theremin virtuoso makes the instrument sing by moving into the magnetic field of two metal coils, one for volume and one for pitch, with anything that is capable of carrying an electric charge, such as a human appendage. The coils in turn vary the frequency of oscillators inside the Theremin. The sound is created when the variable oscillator is mixed with a fixed oscillator and their difference is amplified.

Invented in 1918 by Professor/Mad Scientist/Dance Choreographer Leon Theremin, the Theremin inspired an entire century of electronic music, yet the life of the man who created it is infinitely more interesting than the instrument itself. The Russian scientist and inventor lived, created, composed and choreographed on 54th St. in NYC until his 1945 abduction and forced extradition back to Russia by the Soviets. He invented instruments, burglar alarms, musical dance floors, and self-lighting rotating birthday cakes. He courted Miss Clara Rockmore, undoubtedly the finest Theremin virtuoso in history, but married Lavinia Williams of the First American Negro Ballet in an interracial marriage that cost him most of his friends. Though presumed dead in 1945, Leon Theremin lived until 1993, dying one day after the documentary *Theremin: An Electric Odyssey* debuted in the UK.

THANK YOU FOR SHOPPING AT
PHOTO SHACK
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STEP ONE: Shopping for parts at the Shack. This took hours.

THE BUILDING OF THE THEREMIN

Why build the Theremin? The good company? With the current list of bands using Theremins including Tesla, Matthew Sweet, Pavement, Nenah Cherry, Dinosaur Jr. and the Cocktails this couldn't be the case. Challenge is the motivation. The Theremin is a fascinating instrument yet simple enough that building it is actually within the capabilities of the average jack-ass with some basic knowledge of electronics. Its design is simple and elegant; constructing a Theremin is a perfect introduction to building electronic instruments.

FINDING SCHEMATICS AND BUYING PARTS

This project was started after stumbling across a 1961 issue of *Electronics Illustrated* detailing how to build your own Theremin. How hard could it be? It's all here. Schematics, parts lists, caveats, '60s girlies pointing at Theremins. Hmm...I'll just grab the parts list and slide over to Radio Shack! The helpful Radio Shack sales staff is probably specially trained in Theremin building and will even give me a special *Radio Shack's Theremin Building Tips* pamphlet when I check out!

Later, at Radio Shack:

IAN: Uh, Greg, what's this "resistance" nonsense all about?

GREG: Huh?

IAN: Yeah, says here they're supposed to be 10% resistance. Everything on this wall is 5%.

GREG: I dunno.

IAN: And do the ohms have to be exactly what's on the list?

Because a lot of the parts on this list aren't on this wall at all. What started out as a parts shopping trip degenerated into us pleading with the Radio Shack staff for an "Intro to Electronics" kit to bring us up to speed.

It was obvious we needed either more knowledge of electronics or an updated set of schematics. We stumbled into both. The knowledge came in the form of a man, one Vince Koser, graduate, Sally Struthers school of TV/VCR repair. The schematics were found on the (until then seemingly useless) Internet, at the amazing Theremin Home Page (<http://www.Nashville.Net/~theremin/>) run by Jason Barile. There we found a 1976 update of the *Electronics Illustrated* article. Although it is 20 years old, it can make a big difference when staring at the Radio Shack wall-0-parts. Armed with schematics and a man with the experience to know what 1996 Radio Shack part to replace the 1961 or 1976 items, we stepped to Radio Shack with confidence and dropped \$76 on a bag of resistors, diodes, soldering irons and wire (Mike D, make check payable to Ian Rogers, A-1 Mack).

While Tandy can cover most of the internal basics, the Theremin requires a couple of specialty items you'll probably need to mailorder: the coils that create the magical field of noise. After a trip to a Gardena, California electronics superstore, we came home with the last two coils they had in stock. If a warehouse stocked floor-to-ceiling with tiny electronic gadgets and parts doesn't exist in your village, you probably need to mail order your coils. Try the Theremin home page (<http://www.Nashville.Net/~theremin/>).

ASSEMBLING

"BUILDING ELECTRONICS IS FUN! I CAN DO IT ALL BY MYSELF!"

—from the "Dr. Science Kids Electronic Laboratory packaging"

Fuck you. Building electronics is tedious. Imagine a model where you buy all the parts separately, none of the parts you have quite match the instructional diagram provided, and each piece has to be tied to the whole in such a manner as to bring you five minutes closer to carpal tunnel syndrome. Luckily it was Vince's experienced hands twisting wire and resistors to fix them fast to the circuit board, leaving me and Greg free to take photos, drink, and swim in Vince's pool. "If you really want to build something like this," states Vince, "you'll need a plan of attack. First of all, pick a circuit board that's big enough for what you're trying to build. Use wire wrap. It's relatively fast to wire up, and it's easy to fix mistakes later on. Also, put the parts on the board in the same position as on the schematic. It makes a good visual reference when you're trying to figure out what's broken. Finally, double-check as you build. Better to catch mistakes sooner than later."



REALIZING THE SCHEMATICS ARE WRONG

Knowing your shit has its disadvantages. Vince spotted ill logic in the schematic which an unskilled builder like myself would have gladly overlooked. "The schematic only shows a picture of a transistor," Vince explained. "The orientation isn't clear. There's no differentiation between NPN and PNP. There is voltage shown on the troubleshooting sheet, so it's possible to figure it out if you did the math." Fuck calculus. Taking a guess at the schematic, we elected to pursue a plan based not on the logic of mathematics but on gut instinct and laziness: if it didn't work, we'd fix it later.

TESTING, REPAIRING

After many hours of twisting and drinking, the moment of truth. The 9V adapter is in place and we're ready to fix a charge to it. The excitement is high and after Vince's comment "If we screwed up, this'll probably smoke," Greg and I are hoping something went wrong. No luck. The board still looks the same, it just has a battery attached to it. Now the fun begins. Testing, troubleshooting, repairing. Before you can plug it in and see if it makes noise, it's necessary to go around to each connection with a voltage meter and see if the voltage shown matches the troubleshooting section of the schematic. When it doesn't, you get to figure out which component you put in backwards. And I thought assembling was tedious.

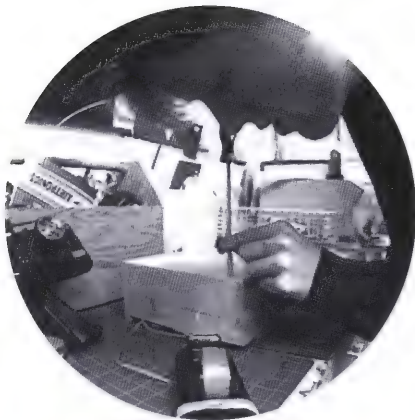
THEREMINTY FRESH

Finally, after much pain and agony, the voltage checks out. The schematic is thrown away and what should be a victory dance is a tired, drunken victory stumble. The following day is spent building a shabby wooden cabinet, and wishing we had some animal flesh to cover the cabinet with. It works. The Theremin is built. It makes noise we can barely control. We're now making contact with Phish's management; rumor is they're looking for a Theremin to make the centerpiece of their next album/tour/fragrance monstrosity. Perhaps we could trade the Theremin for a box of Patchouli.

SO YOU WANNA BE AN MC? BUY THE KIT, BILSNITCH.

Don't try this at home. Next time we're buying a Theremin kit. You should, too. In the end we spent almost two hundred dollars and endless hours. We could have given \$229 to Bob Moog's Big Briar Inc. for a kit that works more like a snap together model and had a working Theremin in much less time (not to mention someone to blame when it didn't work). Plus, the kit comes with a Clara Rockmore CD and a "Mastering the Theremin" video.

For info on the kit, check the Theremin Home Page (<http://www.Nashville.Net/~theremin/>) or contact Big Briar at (704)-251-0090. ☞



STEP TWO Some assembly required. Ian builds the box. **STEP THREE** Vince wires the circuit board. **STEP FOUR** Testing the voltage. If your unit smokes, something is wrong.

NECESSARY TERMINOLOGY

The following slang not only helps you understand how your electronic toys work, it overqualifies you for a job at Radio Shack.

RESISTORS: Drops line voltage, but transfers full current. Energy is dissipated into heat.

CAPACITORS: Component used to store energy. Comes in two flavas.

Electrolytic capacitors look like small cans of Coors, while ceramic capacitors resemble flat, round, hard Silly Putty.

TRANSISTORS: Switch to control flow of current. The heart of all things

digital. You could build a calculator with almost nothing but transistors. Give it a try!

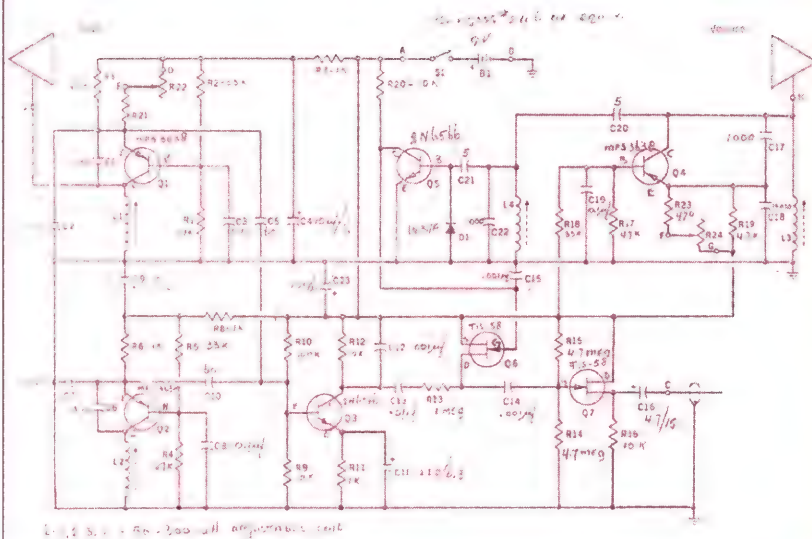
WIRE WRAP: Technique used to make connections between parts by using thin wire and a tool to wrap the wire around the legs of the parts.

ENCLOSURE: Wooden box surrounding your electronic masterpiece.

Preferably made of Tandy leather, or some other animal flesh.

OHM: Measurement of the amount of resistance (how much voltage is dropped) in a resistor.

DIODE: One way switch. Assures current flows in only one direction.



damn schematic

FIVE FUN THINGS TO DO WITH A BROKEN THEREMIN:

1. Sell it to a vagrant. 2. Cover it with dirt and plant a tree, or some flowers. 3. Talk dirty to it, masturbate. 4. Put it in a bag, take the bag into a bar, and get drunk. 5. There are only four fun things to do with a Theremin that doesn't work.

IT TOOK GRAND ROYAL SIX MONTHS TO BUILD A THEREMIN THAT DIDN'T WORK. SAVE YOURSELF THE TIME AND THE HASSLE. GO OUT AND GET A REAL JOB. TRY AND MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE.

NEXT ISSUE: THE HOBBY SQUAD ATTEMPTS AN EVEN MORE DAUNTING PROJECT: BUILDING A SUPERCLOULISH MISFITS "JERRY" MODEL. STAY TUNED.

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Stereo Lab Cabin



Stereolab, getting gurgly at the Troubador. photo: Steve Reiter

Stereolab's Tim Gane on the **Moog=Exploration Equation** by peter relic

Back in '91, when Stereolab released their *Peng!* LP (a futurist take on pop music built on the warmth of analog synths and a French female voice), the word *Peng!*—the sound of government oppressors being taken out by revolutionary forces—started to appear tagged up in indierock hangouts, spreading the word that this was a band worth hearing. The “groop” came through with the '9-2's classic single “John Cage Bubblegum” and three nice full-length follow-ups on Elektra, including the recent *Emperor Tomato Ketchup*.

When Stereolab played LA early in '96, they were mind-blowing. Not in the huff-and-puff-like-a-big-bad-wolf sense; more like trade winds cooling the stuffy waves of too much rock music. Three lovely ladies (Laetitia Sadier, Mary Hansen and Morgan Lhote) sang in harmonies buoyed by a deep groove, while Pete Kember (aka Sonic Boom from Spacemen 3), wearing a down racing jacket in the 94 degree club heat and sucking on a spliff the size of a baby's arm, stood amidst the ensemble getting sonic carbonation from his Moog. At the back stood the 'lab's Tim Gane, strumming away, grinning his trademark sly smile in appreciation of the Spector-cle of Stereolab.

Back home in London, Tim doffed his headphones for a sec to chat with *Grand Royal* about the role of the Moog in Stereolab. *Peng!*

DO YOU PRONOUNCE IT “MOOG” OR “MOEG”?

Tend to pronounce it Moog in England. When people say Moeg sometimes in America I don't know what the heck they're talking about.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST ENCOUNTER A MOOG?

First time I heard one was when I was at school, round about 1981. I was a big fan of a lot of hard electronic bands around at that time, like Throbbing Gristle and Cabaret Voltaire. My big ambition was to be on a record before I was 18. I couldn't play any instruments so the only thing that came naturally at the time was the Moog. The Prodigy was really cheap so I started to buy those and with friends used to make music, electronic noise. We had a label and put out cassettes and records. Basically it was all Moog stuff, just spontaneous waffle, not very listenable. I could just sit there and play it for hours, and even now I just sit there and like listening to the sounds. I always laugh my head off. I think I swapped one for a banjo or mandolin or some silly thing that I never played again.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE SOUND AND PERSONALITY OF THE MOOG?

It's generally a bubbling sort of gurgling, all those words that sound like sounds, basically. I love the Moog's personality, because it's all about imagination. To me it's about infinite possibilities. Some people can just listen to sounds of Moogs playing randomly and find it very enchanting, and other people find it incredibly annoying. One thing I liked about it was that it was very irritating to a lot of people.

IT CAN TRANSFORM SOMEONE'S CONCEPTION OF WHAT IS AND IS NOT MUSICAL.

A Moog opens your mind. I don't think that you can ever really listen to sort of straight music again. Traditional music always seems a bit dull, like there's something missing, if you've played around with these kind of electronic devices. If there's electronic filtering going on or I see Moog on a record sleeve I think “maybe there's something.” It's an indicator of imagination and maybe hopefully interesting music. It's harder to go wrong with a Moog. If you're really crap and can't do anything, if you're completely rubbish, still with a Moog you can make something that's vaguely interesting, but if you're on a guitar or you're singing, then it's hopeless.

WHICH MODELS OF MOOG DOES STEREO LAB USE?

We use a Rogue, Laetitia plays an Opus three, and occasionally we've used Moog equalizers.

HOW HAS YOUR USE OF THE MOOG CHANGED AS THE GROOP HAS DEVELOPED?

Even though we use it as a basic idea—it's on the very first record that we did and on the last one as well—



I changed the way that we use it. In the beginning we used the Moog as a source of odd sounds and noise effects.

After a while I started to use it in a much more melodic way: I would go through all the chords of the song and in a very boring painstaking way play them one note at a time on the Moog until I built up a series of chords as if they were like an organ. The advantage of that was you could have an organ chord made up of really strange sounds that you would never find on a normal organ of any description, so you would build up a series of very odd-sounding songs that were still melodic. After that I went on to another part where we used a Moog as mainly a filtering device. Every time we brought a guitar, bass, drums, vocals, we put it through the Moog. So what you hear on the record is a guitar that's gone through the Moog and been messed around with. For the last year and half we've used it live. Our soundman Simon has a Moog and he puts all the instruments through it. People just don't know where the sound is coming from. It's very simple, just like an effects pedal. We played the Phoenix Festival and had the whole band go through the Moog and this massive PA.

YOU'VE TALKED ABOUT COMPOSING WITH CHORDS THAT ARE BASED UPON ONLY TWO NOTES, AND THAT SIMPLICITY IS COMPENSATED FOR BY THE EXOTICISM OF THE SOUND OF THE MOOG.

That's it, yeah. There's many sub-harmonics and sub-bass things going on in Moogs, so you put a note and it's not in tune but it just sounds really weird, so we'll keep it.

WHAT'S IT LIKE USING THE MOOG FOR COMPOSING AND RECORDING?

I tend to just sketch stuff at home very raw, and when we get to the studio we tend to layer. So the Moog is right there from the very beginning, it's the first thing that goes on sometimes. When you then put on vocals and real instruments they all gravitate around the Moog's essential thing. All our songs aren't done like that, other tracks don't have Moogs on or I put Moogs last thing. So we tend to use it in two ways: it's either the basis of the song, the general atmosphere-inducing instrument, or it's the thing on top-strange sounds that make the song. But we've used the Moog so much that now that it's in my head while I'm writing.

SO YOUR IMAGINATION USES THE MOOG AS A VEHICLE?

What I like about it is it's a way that you can boost your imagination. Electronics are connected with the future. It's not because I'm particularly nostalgic for a '50s ideal of the future, I'm not particularly a big fan of UFOs or anything, but if everybody was to make a record and their criteria for it was how music would sound in 200 years time, then I think that would make it a more interesting series of records than the latest Elton John or whatever. Because then you have to think about how to approach and sometimes it can turn upside down every concept that you have.

THE THING ABOUT ELECTRONIC SOUNDS IS THAT THEY SOUND VERY SPECIFIC TO THE ERA FROM WHICH THEY WERE BORN. DO YOU THINK THE MOOG TRANSCENDS THAT? ARE THE TIMES STARTING TO CATCH UP WITH THE MOOG?

Yeah, I'm listening to some stuff now like the Aphex Twin,

and drums-and-bass stuff, and even though it's about the most up-to-date music you can get, it's still full of vintage analog synthesizers like the Moog. The Moog was the furthest along that particular musical idea went. Synthesizers after that time just sort of recreated sounds of other instruments. But Moogs were making sounds that had never existed before. Even though they're both synthesizers they're not doing the same thing.

WHAT RECORDS THAT ARE IMPORTANT IN TERMS OF LISTENING TO THE MOOG?

The Age of Electronicus by Dick Hyman, that's probably my all-time favorite easy-listening Moog record. A band that used them in the '60s that was a bit more advanced was the United States Of America. To me the most fully integrated in a whole concept of original music that didn't exist really before was probably in early '70s Germany with Cluster, Neu and Faust. The first three or four Kraftwerk albums are pure electronic music of the best kind. Moog = Exploration for me. You can find things that you've never found before.

WHOSE SOUNDS WOULD YOU LIKE TO REDO OR HEAR REDONE ON THE MOOG?

James Brown 'cause it's so simple and you could really get a good groove and a good sound. Sly and the Family Stone. Anything that's away from classical music or anything that's too complicated.

SO DO YOU SEE THE WHOLE SWITCHED ON BACH THING AS BAD USE OF THE MOOG?

Very bad, yeah, I don't like it at all! But actually there's a brilliant "Foggy Mountain Breakdown," that really famous country song, there's a Moog version of that that's really excellent. The most overly Mooged group is the Beatles, that's the last thing I want to hear on the Moog.

WHEN I SAW STEREO LAB A FEW MONTHS AGO IN LOS ANGELES AND PETE KEMBLER WAS WITH YOU UP THERE MOOGING AWAY. IT WAS KIND OF LIKE HE WAS DOING SOMETHING SEPARATE FROM YOUR SET OF SONGS BUT BECAUSE IT WAS SONICALLY AKIN TO IT EVERYTHING FIT. WHAT WAS THE IDEA OF HAVING HIM PLAY WITH YOU?

Well Pete...er, Sonic, he plays a lot live with us when he's able to. He just comes down and whenever he turns up, he brings all this stuff and sets up and plays and he's very sympathetic. We play a long improvised series of noise and electronic stuff. He has a very good understanding of what we're doing and so he just does what he wants. It's amazing when you listen to it at the end it sounds like you've thought about it and spent weeks of consultation trying to get these things together but they just happen like just like that. You can really get amazing stuff from the point of view of actually integration of the sounds. We're just really at home with the instrument as something inside your brain. Now I'm getting really old drum machines which we use in conjunction with the Moogs electronic stuff, all going at once in a kind of chaotic mix. **S**

by max vanderwolf

1 EMERSON, LAKE & PALMER "Lucky Man" Emerson, Lake & Palmer. Before the bloated set in, Keith Emerson laid a Moog solo down against the pastoral austerity of 15-year-old Greg Lake's ballad, and it became the single most recognizable Moog solo in history. Let's face it, solos were what it was all about.

2 EDGAR WINTER GROUP "Frankenstein" *They Only Come Out At Night*. A perfect instrumental pop classic in the tradition of The Ventures' "Walk, Don't Run", but glammed up and progged out for the tonight generation. The middle section was as much of a demonstration of Moog capabilities as we are likely to ever hear on the radio again.

3 GONG *Radio Gnome Invisible Part 1 (Flying Teapot)*, *Angel's Egg* and *You*. Three brilliant LPs of cartoon cosmology from the early '70s. All are generously laced with Tim Blake's signature Moog insanity. As the only quasi-prog band that is currently delivering authentic, enlightened madness, I suggest you get in your teapot taxi and fly toward wherever they may gig.

4 THE MOTHERS "Little House I Used To Live In." *Filmore '71*. Don Preston's searing Moog solo kicks off Zappa's infamous morality play. An essential force in The Mothers' development from R&B/freakout to an electric chamber orchestra, Preston's work with Mike Manter, Carla Bley and others is worth seeking out.

5 GENESIS *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*. A smorgasbord of gorgeous, high-lat, richly dense Moog sounds brought to you by chef Tony Banks. You try to figure out what is and isn't Moog on the prog pinnacle. I'll be devouring its sheer beauty.

6 PINK FLOYD "Welcome To The Machine," *Wish You Were Here*. First Richard Wright threatens us with the subtle, atmospheric magnitude of the Moog's low end, then, when we're good and submissive, he wallows us with the endless elastic ascent of the Moog's solo capabilities. It's like stepping into the ring with Ali after eating some mellow 'shrooms.

7 OZRIC Tentacles *Pungent Eloquent* or *Strangitude* are the most consistent efforts by the band widely considered to be the best hope for prog rock's endangered fertility. Joie Hinton, whose manic Moog carries much of the music, left the band last year with extraordinary drummer Merv Peppier. Oh well, look to the mostly Moogless Porcupine Tree to carry the torch.

8 BRIAN ENO *Roxy Music's* first two, *Here Come The Warm Jets*, *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*, *Before and After Science*, *Bowie's Low* and *Heroes*. The man who would forever change the way rock synthesizer was utilized kept a Moog and a MiniMoog in his arsenal of toys incorporating their capabilities into an overall statement about sound. Death to all wankers!

9 TODD RUNDGREN *Utopia*. A three-keyboard army made up of M. Frog Labat, Ralph Shuckett and Moogy Klingman (Moogy, folks! It doesn't get any better than this), inexplicably overlooked by prog fans, this album is packed with great writing, playing, singing, Rundgren's best guitar playing and of course, Moogy.

10 THE BEATLES "Maxwell's Silver Hammer," *Abbey Road*. The original prog rock band utilized Moog in 1969 as both a sound effect (just before the chorus) and as a solo instrumental played by Paul. As a seven year old, this happy little ditty about a sadistic mass murderer was my favorite song. So why should it be any different today?

Progenitor of organ-driven space-age bachelor pad music, Dick Hyman invented his own warped style that has delighted fans of good music and influenced much of today's Hip. What separates Hyman from the rest of the pack is his incredible organ and Moog playing. His two Moog albums (*Moog: The Electric Eclectics of Dick Hyman* and *The Age of Electronicus*) are experimental oscillated/global/oddmetered funk; his track "Give It Up or Turn It Loose" (from *Electronicus*) may be the best example of Moog funk ever put to tape. Seven years before the first Moog album, Hyman recorded *Moon Gas*, an album which has a sound like no other. Hyman used a sound on the organ where he would bend a note, or a chord, up or down a half step—he was the only organist I know of who used this feature. This effect combined with Vinnie Bell's fantastic spaced-out guitar sounds, a great wordless vocal by Mary Mayo and incredible songwriting makes this one of the best albums ever. He recorded over one hundred records: some other cool ones are *The Man from O.R.G.A.N.*, *Keyboard Kaleidoscope* and *Fabulous*. Dick Hyman has, as well as recording albums under his own name, played on over two hundred more with such greats as Paul Gonsalves, Cal Tjader, Claus Ogerman and (especially) Enoch Light. Though most of his organ and Moog work was done almost 30 years ago, it sounds as fresh today as it did when it was recorded (even Beck sampled some Hyman for his new album, and the Boys gave him a shout out on their last). Unfortunately, if you want to find good, vintage Hyman there is not a lot on CD. A few of those trendy cocktail-mix CDs have Hyman tracks on them. The best way to hear Hyman is on vinyl and there is a lot of him around—just don't expect to find *Moon Gas*. Now 69 years old and a resident of Venice, Florida, he is currently the composer/arranger/conductor/pianist for Woody Allen's recent films.





Dick Hyman: Now, you want to focus on the Moog business?

Eric Bonerz: Yeah, and maybe some Enoch Light too. My first question is...well, you started doing Enoch Light before the Moog?

DH: Yes. After I got out of college, I began working around New York in various clubs. I played in Cafe Society downtown with Tony Scott's quartet, I played in Birdland with Lester Young and various other people. I played in BopCity with Red Norvo opposite Duke Ellington's band.

EB: Wow.

DH: I played in Birdland also with Max Kaminsky's Dixielanders, as well as doubling with Lester Young. And was about as busy as I could get, in those days. Then I began to get into studio work, session work, and radio staff work. I joined a staff of a small station called WMCA, then I moved over to NBC, which was a very large orchestra they kept on staff for all sorts of purposes. I began to double on organ, on Hammond organ at that time. I played soap operas and quiz games/quiz shows, and began recording a great deal as a freelance side man. After a while NBC gave me my first show to conduct which was with an emcee named Norman Brokenshire. I stayed at NBC for five years and then moved on over to CBS and became Arthur Godfrey's music director. But during all this time I was recording with many people, in particular with Enoch Light. I played piano, organ, and almost anything else for Enoch, and became his arranger after awhile. And also all of the people Enoch used in his own recording room made records under our own names, for his own label, which was Command Records. Around this time the Walter/Wendy Carlos record came on the market and it was suggested that I try and do a follow-up to that in a jazz/pop manner. So, I began to work with Walter Sear on his original Moog setup, and this was a very complex, but relatively crude piece of equipment, which looked pretty much like a telephone switchboard—cables going from one outlet to another—with a keyboard in front of course. We had some foot pedal modulation possible for pedal effect, for sustain effects and dynamics. I did two albums in that way which Command released, one of them contained "The Minotaur" and "The Moog and Me," "Topless Dancers of Corfu," and so forth...entirely originals. The second album, I began to do the hits of the day which included the Beatles' "Blackbird" and something by James Brown I can't quite remember the title of...hold on I'll get it...

EB: I think I know the title of that... "Give It Up or Turn It Loose"?

[Dick walks away from the phone for a minute, probably shuffling through records, not hearing Eric.]

DH: Oh yeah, the James Brown thing was "Time is Tight" and other tunes on that album were "Alfie," "Both Sides Now," "Green Onions," "Ob-la-di, Ob-la-da," maybe the James Brown one was "Give It Up or Turn It Loose," I guess that's what that was. Let's see...yeah "Time is Tight" was a different one by B.T. Jones, that doesn't matter. And "Aquarius," from the hot show at that time, *Hair*.

Walter Sear was always my mentor in this thing. I never really became expert at the Moog. Though, after awhile, I got my own MiniMoog and used to carry it around town to play at different sessions. After a certain time it began to get seriously out of tune, and I began seriously to think about my position in that field. I was getting back into jazz in an important way around that time so I gradually stopped working with the Moog and began to get back into the world of Jelly Roll Morton, James P. Johnson, Scott Joplin and other things which Victor and Columbia wanted me to record. As it happens I just did another session after all these years with Walter Sear for the new Woody Allen film which I've been writing for. We needed some special effects for a certain scene and I spent the day with him, with his, what appears to be his original Moog set-up, getting electronic and spooky sounds in order to enhance something we had already recorded for this new film of Woody's. I should also say that I've done a great number of films by now for Woody and for other people, in particular for Woody. I write



scores and/or I arrange. In this last film it's mostly arranging. I conduct, I play piano when it's possible. Other times Derrick Smith comes in and plays piano for me, and some number of years ago I began to get out of studio work and concentrate on my own concert appearances, so I do a great deal of that now at jazz festivals and symphony orchestras and more often than not, solo recitals. I've gotten involved in a number of other things along the way having to do with books of lead sheets with my own ideas of what the right chords should be, and arranging for everybody you can think of...that's about where I am now. Except that a few years ago I decided to move to Florida because I was no longer needed daily in New York. And I commute to New York for various film sessions and so forth and I continue to record my own albums for several different companies: Reference Records of Chicago, Concorde, Arborous Records and a number of others. And that's about where I stand now.

EB: Thank you, that was great. What about the album *Moon Gas*? Was that before the Moog stuff?

DH: Oh *Moon Gas*, I overlooked that. *Moon Gas* was before the Moog was around. It's hard to understand because we tried to get, and we did get, many of those same sounds, but it was pre-synthesizer, so that was before all that. My idea was to make electronic sounding music, but this was before we had any of that, there may have been something called the Ondioline, which I did play from time to time. I don't think I used it on this album. What we did on this [*Moon Gas*] was a couple of electric organs, a piano treated in the John Cage manner—something on the strings that sort of thing and especially Vinny Bell on guitar with his wonderful and weird effect. I still work with Vinny, he does these Woody Allen sessions with me. The idea was to get the electronic effect, but to do kind of standard jazz tunes, and also tunes of the time, and we also featured the soprano voice of Mary Mayo, who unfortunately is no longer with us, and we had various things we rented from Carrol Musical Instruments, like a doorbell, I can't remember, automobile horns I suppose—all kinds of sound effects. At one point we tried something I had read about: if you take a vibrating cymbal and gradually dip it into a bucket of water the tone goes up! This is very unexpected and I believe you'll find that somewhere in that album. The rhythm section as I remember was O.C. Johnson and Milt Hinton...I can't remember exactly who the other people were. Nick VanCleaf was one of the other organs, I know that.

EB: Was there some kind of bendable effect on the organ too?

DH: Oh yeah. Well, you know in those days I used a Lowrey organ which had—I used this on all of Enoch Light's records too, and on everybody else's as I got called, but in particular on this album—it had what they called a "Hawaiian Guitar" effect. That is you could bend a note. Of course I didn't use it often for actual Hawaiian Guitar effects, but it was a satisfactory kind of note bending you could do if you pressed the foot pedal in a certain way. You could get into a note from about a half tone below, so that's there quite a bit. I used that on a lot of my organ albums of that time which were all on Lowrey organ in those days.

EB: Why did you use Lowrey organ, as opposed to Hammond?

DH: Because it had those effects on it. Also because it was stereophonic. It came with two speakers and I generally connected the registration for one keyboard to a Leslie speaker and the other one to a straight speaker and was able to get a lot of antiphonal, back and forth, effects that way. It had a lot of things that the Hammond at that time did not. In addition to that Hawaiian Guitar effect, it had chimes, various kinds of bells, xylophone, things that are standard now, but they were not on the [Hammond] B3. So I became a Lowrey organ artist for some time until years later when I moved on to Baldwin for both piano and organ. By that time most of the organs had the same kind of things on them.

EB: I agree that the Lowrey, when you used it, had so many great sounds...

DH: It really was very useful and I would get hired to play on dates just because people expected me to come up with some interesting sounds that they couldn't quite think of when they were arranging. I usually came through for them in the same way that Vinny Bell would be, called to do much of the same kind of thing. Of course I used all

these things on my own recordings. I made a great many recording under my own name, but even more for other people.

EB: I know. I have probably 20 of your records, but every time I look I see your name on other stuff, and arranging it...

DH: Yeah, it was very busy then. It's still very busy. But it was concentrated at that time almost entirely in recording studios.

EB: Now what year was *Moon Gas*? Because I have the record but there's no date on it.

DH: I don't know exactly, but I would say it was the early '60s.

EB: When you were doing this stuff, *Moon Gas* and the Moog stuff, were you trying to be experimental? Were you thinking about John Cage and stuff like that, or were you just trying to make pop music?

DH: Well, I was usually responding to a call from a record company. People wanted to get into electronic sounds and they called me, and I would respond. I wasn't trying to start a revolution. I was just responding to a very interesting demand.

EB: Uh-huh. Let me say that *Moon Gas* is one of my favorite albums.

DH: Yeah?

EB: I know a lot of people...it's a very hard to find record, of all your records. *Moon Gas* is the hardest to find.

DH: Yes.

EB: I've gotten offers from people all over the world wanting me to sell it. A record company I think is trying to release it on CD.

DH: I would love that, but I wonder who that would be?

EB: It's a label called Scamp in New York. They've been putting out some of the Martin Denny stuff.

DH: What's the name of the label?

EB: Scamp. S-C-A-M-P.

DH: Say it again.

EB: S-C-A-M-P. Scamp.

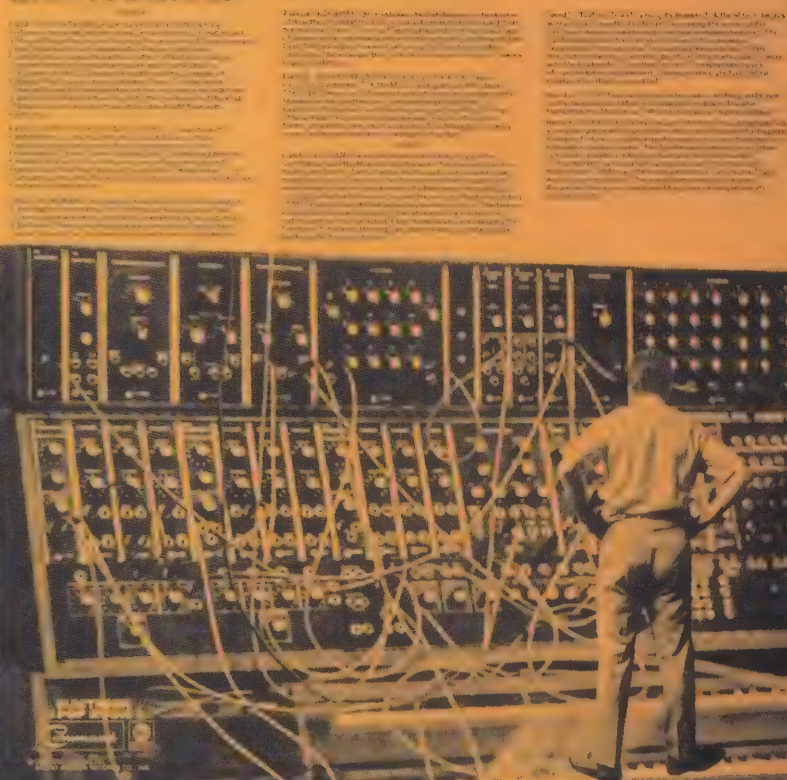
DH: Do you know the names of the people there?

EB: Yeah, if you want I can go get the guy's number who I talked to.

DH: I'd like that.

EB: I'm doing some other stuff with him. I wanted to ask you, you're probably aware of the whole resurgence of this kind of stuff?

Electronics



DH: I've heard a bit. You say Scamp records is going to re-release *Moon Gas* ?

EB: They're trying to. You know that Rhino records put a couple of your songs on some compilations recently?

DH: No.

EB: You're not aware of that?

DH: No, nobody ever told me. Rhino did what?

EB: Rhino records does all re-issue stuff...

DH: Yeah? What did they re-issue?

EB: They have this Cocktail CD, of all cocktail stuff. And some of your stuff is on there.

DH: Yeah. It's interesting. Because I've been speaking to a fellow from Canada, from Toronto named Jaymz Bee. Do you know who he is?

EB: No, I don't.

DH: He also told me about what is now being called Cocktail, and it's the same kind of thing apparently. It's interesting. I'd like to know more about Rhino.

EB: Let me... I have a good friend that owns a record store and if I can find it, I'll include that CD with...

DH: I sure would like that.

EB: I'll send you some of the old magazines too. Because, yeah, I don't know if you're aware of it, but on the Internet there's a lot of newsgroups, and your name always comes up. I think a lot of those albums are going to re-released on CD. I would assume that in the next five years, or even less, that a lot of yours are going to be re-released.

DH: Yeah, well I'd like that, and if you can tell me more about it I'll make sure that I can help in some way.

EB: You don't own the rights to any of these do you?

DH: I don't own the rights to the records, but I am the composer of many of the songs.

EB: Yeah, I'll get you that guy's number.

DH: Yeah.

EB: I wanted to ask you about, you wrote a book I think about odd meter, or something like that?

DH: Oh, I wrote a book called *Duets in Odd Meters and Far-Out Rhythms*, yeah. Duets to help you learn how to read and play in odd meters and changing time signatures. That's long out of print.

EB: Yeah, 'cause *Moon Gas* has some of that odd meter stuff.

DH: Yeah, *Moon Gas* had that. And I took some of those pieces that I had written for the book, put them together, and I included them in the *Electric Eclectics* album. I think I called it *Four Duets In Odd Meter*.

EB: That's great. Quickly, can you tell me some of your influences when you were growing up?

DH: My influences as a jazz pianist have been Art Tatum, Teddy Wilson with whom I studied for awhile, Fats Waller, and then later on as we got into be-bop, Bill Evans, George Shearing—incidentally I'm doing a two piano concert with him this weekend in New York, with George Shearing—Johnny Gomari, he influenced me quite a bit. On the organ it was Jimmy Smith, of course, but before that there was an organist that I used to play opposite in a bar in Harlem, just when I got out of college, a fella named Charlie Stewart. He was the first person I ever heard play jazz on an electric organ. We're talking about way back, this is around 1948-'49. I learned a few things from him, then I began to play the organ in the stu-

dios and learned how to do that kind of stuff—the soap opera and game show kind of organ playing. But I must say my influences early on were, in particular, those pianists and also, collectively, a big collection of old records, which my big brother had put together and gave to me of all the classic jazz of the 1920s and '30s. So I grew up with that, was imprinted early on with that material. It came in very handy 'cause a large part of my career, more recently, has been re-creating those old things. So I've gotten to be very familiar with, I had always been familiar with, these records, but I got to be even more familiar with transcribing them, the old records by Ellington, Jelly Roll Morton, Bix Beiderbecke, that sort of thing.

EB: Great. Can I ask you a little about your early albums, 'cause I've seen some of your early albums and you looked like a pretty straight guy. Then your look got kind of...you got kind of hip looking, right? I would have to say so on those Moog records...

DH: Well, you know, that was the time when everything was changing. In the early '60s everybody was trying to be as hip as we could. Dress codes were changing. When I first began recording and playing radio shows, people dressed rather formally. Suits and ties were normal. But after awhile things changed and pretty soon we were beginning to dress more like we do today, and it was something that happened, if not overnight, very rapidly. Within a year or so, everyone began to loosen up. As to my own appearance on those old covers, I'm looking at one now—I see myself smoking a cigar and with a beard and with a turban or something, a scarf around my neck—I guess that was meant to be hip. I did have a beard in those days and at one point when I wanted to protest President Nixon I grew one sideburn and I thought that maybe other people would latch on to that idea and we'd have a great one sideburn protest in the country. Nobody followed me. Everybody thought I was being very peculiar indeed as I could look at them with one profile or the other, and I was alone with my protest.

EB: Maybe it will come back? Like your music?

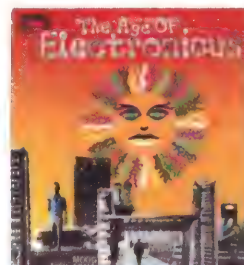
DH: Well, you never know.

EB: Now, you're saying you're not really familiar with the resurgence of this cocktail stuff?

DH: Well, yes, let me put it this way. I have been reading about it and I've been hearing about it from people like yourself, Jaymz Bee in Toronto. I'm very happy to see it. There's an old expression...

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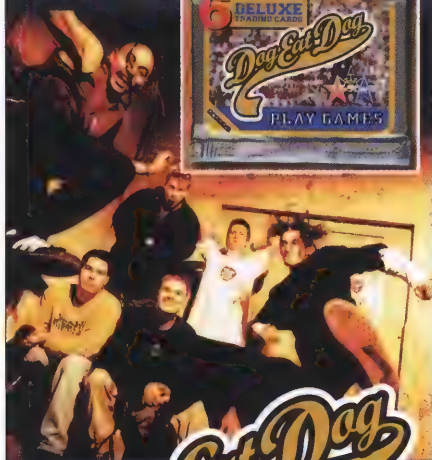


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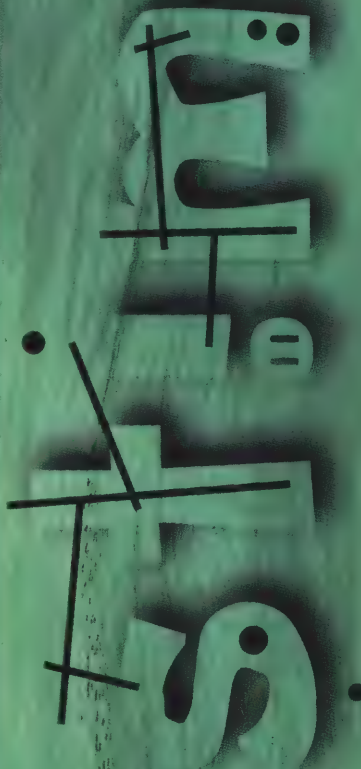
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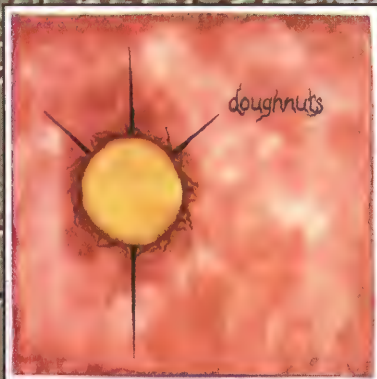
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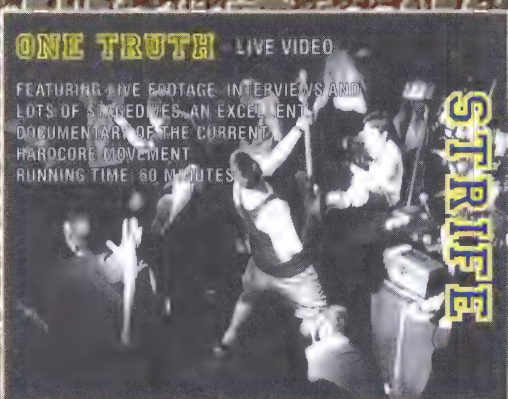
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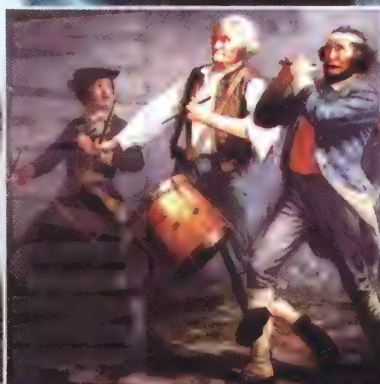
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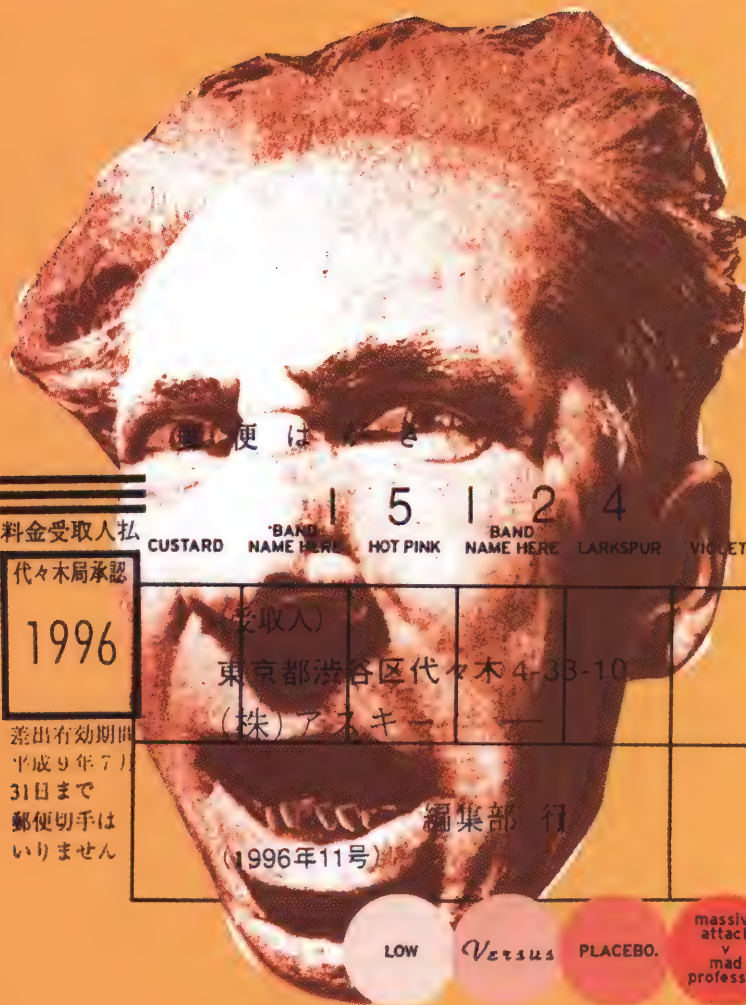
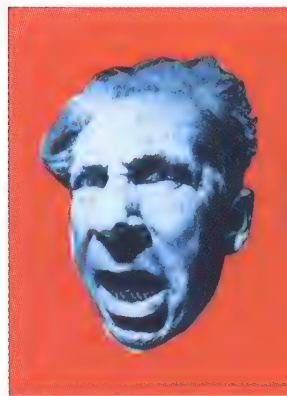
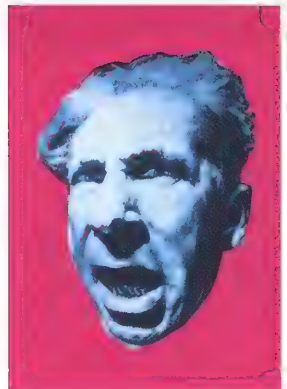
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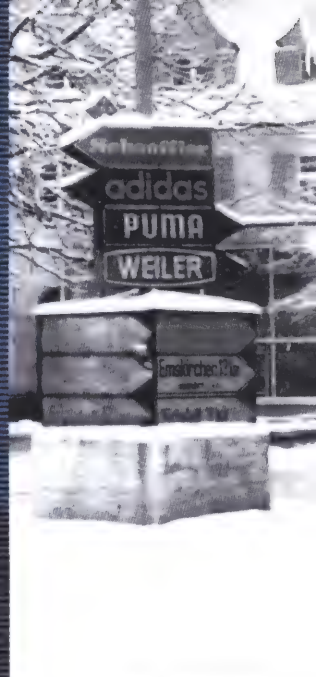


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The end of World War I saw Germany fall into a state of hyper-inflation—a single loaf of bread cost a wheelbarrow full of money one day, two wheelbarrows full the next. In order to make ends meet in the Dassler household during this time, Rudolf joined his father in the shoe mills. Adolf, trained as a baker but unable to find work in that trade, set up a small shoemaking operation in the back of the laundry, using whatever leftover textiles from the war he could get. Cutting these materials by hand was both difficult and time-consuming as Herzogenaurach was still some years away from having electricity, so Adolf crafted a man-powered trimmer out of a bicycle and some leftover wood (a contraption which bears more than a passing resemblance to the washing machine powered by Gilligan on the Island). At first he could only get enough surplus tires, sacks, and helmets to produce bedroom slippers but as Adolf's hand-crafted creations became popular, he was able to get the materials necessary to make track shoes and soccer boots. Here, in the production of sport shoes, Adolf Dassler found the ultimate combination of his skill as a shoemaker with his love of sports and his thoughtful, perfectionist nature. Success was eminent.

By 1926 Dassler sport shoes gained enough popularity to cause father Christolf and brother Rudolf to quit their jobs at the mills and join up with Adolf and a staff of twenty workers in a new factory. Later that same year Adolf's first revolutionary vision was produced—soccer boots with nailed-on cleats. The Amsterdam Olympics of 1928 were the first to have a participating athlete wear Adolf's shoes, and at the Los Angeles Games of 1932 Uli Jonath won a bronze medal in a pair of Dasslers. The ever-studious Adi subsequently went to school for a year to study shoe design and manufacturing, there meeting his future wife Käthe. With the Colonel Tom Parker-like Rudi handling sales, Käthe handling finance, and Adi continuing in product development, the Dassler Schuhfabriken prospered.

Hitler's platform of ultra-nationalistic fascism carried him to power in Germany during the early thirties, and it was his intention to use the Berlin Olympic Games of 1936 to prove to the world that Aryan Germans were the "master race." This aim was seriously undermined when a black American sprinter named Jesse Owens won four gold medals, breaking two world records and one Olympic record in the thrashing of his Kraut competition. Furious, the little guy with the mustache and great seats made an

embarrassed early departure from the stadium rather than present the medals. This historically significant performance was an especially important one in that tiny Bavarian village—somehow, Owens had acquired a pair of Dassler track spikes and wore them that day. Jesse Owens had given Adolf Dassler his first taste of Olympic gold, and the two men remained friends for the rest of their lives.

As Germany moved toward starting World War II the brothers Dassler moved toward a personal war, the effects of which would be felt all over the world. Rudolf convinced Adolf that they should, as good Germans, both enlist in the Nazi military. However, only Adolf's papers made it into the mail—a cleaning woman found Rudi's forms in the trash. Whether intentionally deceitful (as Adolf felt) or not, fate dealt Rudolf a twisted hand as—for reasons that remain unclear—it was Rudi who was called up to serve for the war's duration. Adolf was left at home to run the factory, now converted by the Nazi Wehrmacht to the production of boots for soldiers. By war's end Herzogenaurach had fallen to the Allies and the Dassler factory and home were occupied by American soldiers. Adolf was a warm host to the American GI's, even hand-crafting a pair of track spikes for one lucky soldier. Rudolf spent a year stewing in a POW camp after the war, and upon his return to the Dassler home he bitterly insisted that his kid brother did nothing to hasten his release. Adolf's claims that he did everything he could were of little consolation to Rudolf, and relations between the brothers began to get outright nasty. One account claims Rudolf tried to set up Adolf to cheat on Käthe. Rudolf's son Arimin caused great offense by spitting on his Aunt Käthe—nothing more than a childhood accident Arimin was later to claim. It was in this atmosphere that many other small issues became major incidents between the brothers and their respective families. Finally, in the spring of 1948, Rudolf stormed out of the family home, vowing never to speak to his



Rudolph Dassler.

First Adidas shop trimmer.



Jesse Owens' Olympic victory cleat.

brother again. Along with his family he took the sales staff of Dassler and moved across town to start his own shoe company called *Ruda*, a contraction of his name. An advertising executive suggested changing the "R" to a "P" and the "d" to an "m" to create the name *Puma*, so as to capture the imagery of the fast cat.

Adi was left with most of the Dassler work force which gave him the advantage over Rudi in the area of Adi's own expertise—shoe design and production. Like his older brother, Adi used a contraction of his name for his company, first producing shoes under the name *Addas*, before settling on *Adidas*, the first three letters of his first and last name. The two support stripes which were common on pre-war Dassler shoes became three, and the Adidas logo was born.

The two factories on each side of little Herzogenaurach each began to resemble its patriarch—Puma's strength was sales, while Adidas' technological innovations were reflective of the quiet, perfectionist craftsman who kept a notebook on his bedside table in case a shoe design idea came to him in the middle of the night. In fact, it was combination of these characteristics that brought Adidas its first worldwide fame. Rudi, ever the cigar-chomping braggart, antagonized the head coach of the German national soccer team which caused their switch from wearing Puma to wearing Adidas. The timing was perfect. Adi had come up with another revolution in athletic shoe design—soccer boots with replaceable cleats—and the 1954 World Cup would be their debut. The German team made it to the final, but found themselves impossible underdogs against the mighty Hungarian squad. A driving rain turned the field to mud by halftime. Back in the locker room, Adi (an official guest of the team), helped the German team screw longer cleats into their boots. The West Germans' increased traction in the second half led to an upset 3-2 win and their first World soccer championship. Newspapers all over the globe mentioned the boots, and the victory brought pride back to a nation destroyed twice by war. Adi was a national hero. Production of Adidas shoes jumped from eight hundred pairs a day to two thousand.

Two years later Adidas struck again, this time at the Olympics in Melbourne, Australia. Adi had sent his only son Horst, just twenty years old, down to the games with his latest invention, a track shoe with four spikes. Horst's mission was to get the shoes on the feet of the best athletes. He succeeded by merely giving the shoes away. Rudi had four years to come up with a response, deciding to blatantly ignore amateur rules and covertly pay German track star Arimin Harry to switch to Puma, as he had done with numerous professional soccer players to get them out of Adidas (who enjoyed a 9 to 1 advantage at the time). Harry went to the Rome Olympics in 1960, won the gold in Pumas and the payoff was kept quiet. But Rudi had set a precedent—from that day on, amateur as well as professional athletes wanted money to compete in a particular shoe.

The brothers Dassler battled each other in this under-the-table bidding war with a vehemence that can only be born of a family rivalry. In fact, the only rule of the competition between the two firms in every aspect of sport shoe production, sales, and promotion was that there were no rules at all. Lawsuits over patent and copyright infringement became a particular favorite sword between the two brothers. Usually Adi would invent and carefully patent an innovation (Adi's name is on over 800 patents and patent applications worldwide), only to have Rudi craftily copy and incorporate it into a Puma shoe model, and the lawsuits would begin. Adi once told a London journalist that "If there had been a hole left in Rudolf every time I had to poke him and say, 'Heh, that was my invention,' he would look today like a piece of [Swiss Cheese]." Rudi read this quote and sued. Each side would scour the other's catalogs and advertisements for ammunition that could fuel a new false advertising lawsuit. Once, Adidas waited until Rudi's 70th birthday to file a restraining order on a Puma ad containing questionable language. This was, however, payback for Puma's prior filing of a similar restraining order on Adi's birthday. Adi said his whole family had been sued at one time or another, and that soon he expected the Dassler grandchildren to continue the family feud.

Beyond the lawsuits, the advances in technology which fueled Adidas and Puma during the 1960s clearly established German sport shoes as the best in the world—they had unsurpassed craftsmen, the most advanced machinery, and the materials were superior. West German labor remained inexpensive, which kept the shoes affordable for everyday athletes, and meant a near-lock on the worldwide athletic shoe market for the Dassler brothers. By the end of the '60s, Adidas had 16 factories and six sales companies producing 22,000 pairs of shoes a day all over the globe. In terms of athletic achievements, Adidas could boast that more than 275 world track and field records had been broken using their shoes. Puma's production figures were

intentionally kept secret by Rudi to hide the fact that they were only about one-quarter the size of Adidas. Both companies claimed to export to over 100 countries, including the US, where P.F. Flyers, Keds, and Converse were the main competition.

As far as Adi Dassler was concerned, success in the corporate ledger meant very little. It did allow him the freedom to expand his pursuit of excellence in athletic shoes to nearly every sporting discipline. *Specialty* became the operative word at Adidas—by the early '70s they were using exotic materials like reverse kangaroo skin and gold lamé full-grain leather to make the 140-plus different shoe models in the Adidas line. No matter what the sport—(see the chart)—the one thing every shoe Adi and his Research and Development team crafted had in common was that it was true to his passion—the most technologically advanced, finest-produced footwear for every athlete.

Adi's son Horst was now heading operations in France, where Adidas had more factories than in Germany. In 1970 Horst's factories produced the Superstar, Adidas' first entry into the basketball shoe market in America. Along with its hi-top brother, the Promodel, the Superstar featured an all-leather upper and rubber toe cap. Superstars were hi-tech and hi-comfort, especially when compared to Converse's Chuck Taylor All-Star, which was the basketball shoe for as long as anyone could remember, and had undergone no advance in design in just about as long. Many pros needed only the promise of more free shit to switch to Superstars, and the American shoe companies, having no leather basketball shoes, were sent reeling. By the mid-'70s, Converse and Keds began paying players like Dr. J, Jo Jo White, Tiny Archibald, and Dave Cowens to wear their leather and suede competitors to the Superstar, Promodel, Tournament, and Americana of Adidas, but by that time they had seen 75% of all NBA and ABA players switch to the three stripes.

It was also in the early '70s that a burgeoning shoe company out of Portland called Blue Ribbon Sports was scurrying to come up with a logo for their new product. The head of this small firm, Philip Knight, contacted Carolyn Davidson, a local art student and agreed to pay her \$35 to come up with a logo for the side of their shoe that conveyed stability and movement. Later, at the meeting with the principals of Blue Ribbon, Carolyn became despondent—nobody liked any of her ideas. She quickly realized her problem; they all were in love with the three stripe design of Adidas. Finally they agreed to go with a fat, fleshy checkmark design. "I don't love it," Knight said, "but I think it'll grow on me."

Knight and his cohorts weren't alone. Many Americans had become enamored with the three stripes. Wearing a pair of Adidas was not only the most comfortable choice in footwear, it became a status symbol—telling everyone that

all day i dream about shoes

by dan field

two brothers with a foot fetish

My brother and I first found out about Adidas 24 years ago, after hearing a rumor about "these superior German track shoes that somehow greatly increased any person's athletic performance." Since that first spark of curiosity, Adidas has been a part of our lives; way more than just the sneakers on our feet.

Before Adidas, my mother tried to instill the values that would teach a child not to love material objects. She did a good job; in my adult life, I can honestly say I could care less about anything that is sold... with one exception: I love Adidas more than anything and (somewhat sadly) almost anyone. I personally have so many different feelings for this company and have spent so much time wearing and thinking about the products that Adidas manufactures, that to me Adidas is much more than just shoes.

With that confessional out, it is time to take a speedy look back at two kids' twisted world of what I clinically call Product Infatuation Addiction.

My brother Alex was the first to score; being a few years older than I, it was easier to find his larger shoe size. My first pair of Varsity Adidas came Christmas of 1974. I was 8. Red suede with white leather stripes, they were so cool, they had their own distinct "new shoe" smell.

For a few years we just bought shoes, wore and loved 'em, and then bought more. However, soon Alex and I both realized that this wasn't enough, we needed to get closer, to know more, to make direct contact. We had a plan.

Alex typed a letter on our father's corporate stationery to make it look more official, and it was sent to Herzogenaurach, West Germany. I have often wondered how my life would have been different if they hadn't responded to that letter. But they did. A few weeks later a large poster tube arrived.

In it were two huge posters, each featuring every shoe model and its intended purpose. The posters were called Sport Shoe Usage Charts; and for a kid who had yet to enjoy or even really understand sex, it was like pornography.

As I became older and bolder, my job was to call all the Adidas distributors and ask for the latest goodies. I had all the numbers memorized (and still remember them today), and most of the promotions people at the distributors knew me by my nervous pre-pubescent voice. My brother was in charge of writing the factories located in different parts of the world. Soon our collection was not only massive, but in several languages and representative of Adidas' promotional efforts from various corners of the globe. We also started collecting Adidas print ads and managed to find over 100 from 1968 to present (the ad collection is now on loan to Adidas USA). As the harvesting of anything Adidas-related continued, my room evolved into a strange shrine. Posters fought for precious wall space, mobiles dangled from the ceiling, shoes were proudly displayed, even some of the furniture was Adidas. My room also contained the motherload: An entire large oak dresser filled with thousands of unstuck stickers, catalogs, Frisbees, belt buckles, newsletters, calendars, price guides, pens, balloons, tie pins, note pads, toy cars and delivery vans, tennis balls, sun visors, painter's hats, keychains, whistles, countertop displays, inflatables,

you could afford the best without saying a word. Rock stars, grade school kids, hippies, actors, deliverymen, and many others put on their Adidas everyday, just like the athletes for which Adi designed his shoes. Prominent sports stars in Adidas backed up the popularity of the shoes. Put it this way; the publicity generated by Mohammed Ali and Joe Frazier, who squared off for the first time in the summer of 1971, was billed as "The Fight of the Century." The bout brought intense worldwide attention to Madison Square Garden as Ali attempted to regain his title, which was stripped for his refusal to serve in the army during the Vietnam war. A few days after Frazier's historic win he was vacationing in a certain little Bavarian village, visiting with the man who crafted the boots he wore that night. Smokin' Joe inscribed "To Adi, Right on to the King!" before handing them over to be placed next to Ali's boots (which he had sent right after the fight with the greeting "To my German friend...") in Dassler's personal shoe museum.

Tennis also enjoyed a surge in popularity in the early '70s. Having always been a staple of Adidas' European lines, the company was more than ready for this US boom, with a complete 3-stripped family of everything from the obligatory headbands and wristbands to shirts, skirts, dresses, shorts, socks, and even tennis racquets. The 1974 Battle of the Sexes match between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs was pure gimmick, but a sold-out Houston Astrodome and a live prime time broadcast on national television showed just how popular the game had become. Adidas were on both Riggs' and King's feet that night, and her distinctive blue suede-with-white striped "BJK" women's tennis shoe model was as big a hit as Adidas' main men's tennis shoe, the Stan Smith Halliet.

The Stan Smith (Halliet name was soon dropped), along with running shoe models like the Rom, Italia, Olympia and Gazelle were always favorites among the casual athletic shoe wearers of this era. By 1975 another trend conquered all of America like the tennis boom had a few years earlier—jogging. Starting with Frank Shorter's win in the Marathon at the 1972 Olympics (in Adidas, of course), Americans became transfixed with the idea of long distance running, and took to the streets in droves. In addition to those training shoes preferred by the casual wearer, Adidas offered serious running shoes in the SL '72 and SL '76 models, as well as the newly developed A-15 tracksuit. Featuring an ultra-comfortable fleeced lining and super-shiny exterior, the A-15 quickly crossed over to become a status symbol unto itself. Everything was going right for Adidas in America, and combining this with their always-dominant market position in Europe and expanding markets everywhere else meant a rise in production figures from the 22,000 pairs a day cranked out in 1969 to 130,000 pairs a day by late 1975. It was estimated that worldwide sales of all Adidas products totaled half a billion dollars in 1976, \$100,000,000 in the US alone.

With this kind of meteoric rise in popularity comes a few problems. In America, cheap knock-off sneakers with three stripes flooded department stores. Adidas (sold only in sporting goods stores) was stuck—legal ambiguities over their exclusive right to the three stripe design in the US made the situation tricky. The answer was to create a new logo and carefully trademark it all over the world, and from this the Adidas trefoil was born. Henceforth the word Adidas in its super-rounded typeface would always be followed with the three-pointed leaf with three stripes running through it. The trefoil was an instant hit, and T-shirts, warm-up suits, socks, shorts, and gym bags with the Adidas name and logo became important fashion statements in every corner of the globe.

Back at the Adidas headquarters in Herzogenaurach, things had become decidedly upscale. Formal dinners were now commonplace at the Dassler home. Guests would include Olympic officials, various heads of state, prominent Adidas endorsee athletes, and important sales accounts. They all were routinely flown in for a little business junket, put

adidas 
The all-sports people
SPORT SHOE USAGE CHART





up at the Sporthotel Adidas, and generally pampered by the company. Adi had very little interest in any of this fraternizing, and left the entertaining to his wife Käethe. Once in a great while he would pop in to greet their guests, usually in a warm-up suit, and usually gone as quickly he arrived. He preferred the company of the athletes, alone in his workshop, where he could fine-tune his latest ideas, and in special cases, make them custom shoes.

The athletes always felt a bond with Adi; they saw that what motivated him was the same thing that inspired them—the constant desire to improve. With all this success, and now well into his seventies, it would have been understandable if Adi Dassler set off on a lavish retirement. Instead he continued to do what made him happiest—going into his workshop each day, tinkering with new shoe ideas. His revolutionary World Cup '78 model soccer shoe took two years to design, and Adi considered it his most important development in soccer shoes in 20 years.

Adi's induction into the US Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (NSGA) Hall of Fame on January 20, 1978 could, in retrospect, be singled out as the apex of the history of Adidas—the founder of what had become a billion dollar company accepting the highest honor his industry had to offer (and the first time a non-American had been given the award). Inside, Adi must have felt like this was the medal ceremony at the end of an Olympic race. Seven months later, on September 9, 1978, Adi Dassler died at the age of 77. His workshop amid the tools now worn from a lifetime of use were new shoe components and designs.

Aside from what Horst Dassler called the "great void in the area of technical innovation," left by Adi's death, things seemed to be set for continued success at Adidas, with the team of Horst, Käethe, and son-in-law Alfred Bente continuing to run the business operations of the firm. However, the seeds of the company's



Adidas Shoe Museum.

imminent fate were taking root even before the death of Adi Dassler. Those guys from Portland, Blue Ribbon Sports, had taken their little shoe company and ridden the same waves that propelled Adidas' rise in America. When Philip Knight and two of his most trusted cohorts, Rob Strasser and Jim Moodhe, sat down to lunch with Horst Dassler at that same 1978 NSGA trade show where Adi was inducted into the Hall of Fame, they could look back at over \$36 million in sales and \$11 million profit for the past eight months of Blue Ribbon Sports operations. And with the official change of corporate name to "Nike, Inc." the future looked golden. Just how promising was tipped off when Horst uncharacteristically mentioned that a good Adidas shoe model sold 100,000 pair a year in the US. The men from Nike were astonished—their Waffle Trainer running shoe was selling about that many. A month.

Had Knight, Strasser, and Moodhe mentioned their sales figures to Horst, it is likely he would have immediately gone about fixing the elements that were constraining Adidas' American sales. Simply keeping up with the increased demand for athletic footwear was a problem for Adidas, and retailers were getting used to large portions of their orders not being filled because there weren't enough shoes. Nike solved the problem by creating a futures program, in which major retailers like the up-and-coming Foot Locker committed to the purchase of a specific number of shoes in exchange for a discount. Other less-tangible undercurrents all pointed to one conclusion—Adidas was not listening to its American marketplace. A classic example is Adidas' refusal to add more cushioning to its running shoes for Americans, who ran on concrete roads and not the cinder trails of Europe. This left the door open on the running shoe market, and Nike, who's product quality improved dramatically after 1977, soon began to dominate.

Adidas couldn't totally be taken to task for such decisions. They were a worldwide enterprise headquartered in the center of Europe, and American sales

standups of Franz Beckenbauer, print ad campaign kits, mini shoes, bags, tags, hangers, and other bizarre promotional items. It was around this time that I overheard my mother on the phone; "I just don't think this is healthy, they have taken this thing way too far..." Her disapproval merely fueled my sick little mind.

Alex and I began attending national trade shows, where in some cases we knew more about the shoes than the sales reps.

Unfortunately this is where the story sours. Adidas, the kings of sport, the manufacturers of cool, the one thing you could believe in, began fucking up. It was 1980, and I was pissed; how could they be slow, dumb, stubborn, complacent, and weak—all at the same time? Once light-years ahead of the competition, Adidas was being lapped by a goofy redheaded freak who got his start selling shoes out of the back of his car. Nike were inferior products whose design innovations were inspired by a waffle iron (hence, the original Waffle Trainers). But Phil Knight had two things going for him: 1) He was accepted as an insider in the Track and Field world. 2) Most importantly, he did something that Adidas had stopped doing; he listened.

From my years of studying the company, I could see every mistake Adidas were making. I felt frustrated knowing I was smart enough to save them, but was only 13.

Down the toilet they went, and the farther Adidas sank the less we began to care about them. We made the transition from Official Superfreaks who lived, ate and breathed for Adidas, gradually becoming just simple Adidas fans who began seeking interest in other things, such as the classic teenage vices.

As the '90s began, after years of losing countless millions, out of nowhere Adidas actually made one good decision. An idea so simple and strong, it made people look past years of mistakes and helped revive a company that had suffered "the equivalent of five bullet wounds to the head," in the words of their own president. The answer for Adidas was two words: Old School. They began to remake those shoes we all loved as kids.

This good idea was followed by more breakthroughs, like actually *listening* to what people wanted. In 1994, Adidas found us and we consulted on several shoes, and helped with the design of the Norton low top, a skateboard shoe. They flew us to their headquarters in Portland to meet with [the then head] of Adidas America, Peter Moore.

Unfortunately, the more I became aware of how things were actually being run on the inside, the more I could tell this huge turnaround was only going to be short lived. Once again I watched a blind company making mistake after mistake, only this time I was older and given the opportunity to tell them what they didn't want to hear. My profoundly sad (bitter?) premonition is as the '90s close, I will have the displeasure of witnessing Adidas going right down the shitter for a second time in 20 years.

The only solution:



Dan Field

Head of Advertising, promotions
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only made up about one-fifth of their total. But as the 1980's started, America was emerging as the trend-setter for the rest of the world, and Nike was right there to reap the benefits. With the exception of running shoes, Nike offered comparatively substandard products to those of Adidas, but from the clever personality posters of basketball, football, and baseball stars to the marketing of number one-ranked tennis superbrat John McEnroe, Nike was winning the marketing war in the US. Adidas made things a lot easier with horrendous advertising campaigns—their 1980 effort hinged on an insipid "Up With People"-flavored jingle, "We've Got A Feeling For Winning." This spawned an even more moronic and equally unsuccessful campaign two years later, "Love Your Body, Flash Adidas." 1982 was an especially disastrous year for Adidas in the US as it took until nearly mid-year to even produce a catalog from which retailers could place their orders.

The fall of the dollar against European currencies in the late '70s had driven the prices of Adidas higher, especially when compared to Nikes, which were made mostly in China and other Far East nations. The Adidas plan of attack to start producing shoes in America seemed the answer to both their higher cost problem and the constant problem with supplying retailers, which had now reached epidemic proportions. But the company's luck continued to be bad as the shoes that came out of the Kutztown, PA plant were poorly made. Especially disturbing was the shoddy quality of the Samba, the number one soccer training flat in the world, and a model which was gaining popularity in America since its 1980 incorporation into the US line. Soccer players began calling their stores, demanding they get their hands on the European-made Sambas, or else. Defections of once-loyal buyers in Adidas' strongest sport signaled the beginning of the end.

Basketball was another area which proved to be big trouble for Adidas. Since their triumph over Converse and Keds in the mid-'70s, Adidas did almost nothing right in roundball. First the ABA folded—Adidas was the "Official Shoe of the ABA." Then Nike wisely spent it's promotional budget on lots of charismatic stars like Artis Gilmore, Reggie Theus, George Gervin, and the Rim Wrecker himself, Darryl "Chocolate Thunder" Dawkins. Adidas had most of their basketball promo money tied up on only a couple of stars who were known to basketball fans as much for their attitudes as their scoring proficiency; Kareem, Rick Barry, and the oft-injured Bill Walton. Even Adidas' time-tested technique of producing technologically superior shoes did not help. Having made no significant advancement in their basketball shoes since the Superstar and Promodel were introduced in 1970, Adidas combined all their developments into one model, the Top Ten. From the soles that extended out far past the upper, to the expanded ventilation holes in the toe box, to the extensions in the lacing yoke which allowed better foot flex, to the cushioned ankle support, these shoes were nothing like their Adidas predecessors, or anything else on the market in 1979. The shoe was too drastic a change for what was now the biggest part of the market—casual wearers of basketball shoes, who said they were ugly. Hardcore players loved them (many still do today), and the technological advancements were eventually copied in some form by all competing shoe companies. But Top Ten was something of a flop for Adidas—too far ahead of its time.

Nike also lucked out when it decided to put Sonny Vaccaro, head of the Dapper Dan high school basketball tournament, on its payroll. Through Vaccaro, Nike was able to sign endorsement deals with the top college coaches like

John Thompson at Georgetown and Jim Valvano at Iowa (later an NCAA champion at North Carolina State), who used his tournament to scout for talent. Entire college teams were appearing on national television in their Nikes for much less than the cost of a couple of NBA stars.

Vaccaro's best bit of advice to Nike was to go after a college player who had never even worn their shoes. Michael Jordan wore Converse during his three years at North Carolina, but that was because Dean Smith had made it part of the uniform. In practice Jordan would wear Adidas (A careful scan of the video *Michael Jordan—Come Fly With Me* shows him in his vehicles of choice; white-with-Carolina-blue-striped Promodels). Even after meeting with top Nike execs and hearing their extensive marketing plan for the "Air Jordan" line of shoes and clothing, the self-proclaimed "Adidas nut" plotted how to get into the three stripes. Adidas never even met with Jordan, they merely offered his agent the same \$100,000 a year they were paying Jabbar, with no Jordan shoe, and no Jordan clothing. Michael's own last-ditch offer of "If you even come close [to the Nike deal], I'll go Adidas" was refused. Truly, the late '70s and early '80s were a symphony of errors by Adidas in America. This moment, in the late summer of 1984, was its crescendo.

Even if Adidas had the foresight to sign the greatest basketball player in history, it is doubtful that they would have enjoyed the same success Nike has had with Michael Jordan. As evidenced by the 1980 and 1982 ad campaigns, marketing and advertising were never Adidas' strong suits—the shoes had always sold themselves. But by the mid-'80s the average US consumer had become more advertising-driven than ever. The creative heads at Nike were quick to realize this fact, and with the help of a powerful LA ad agency, the company uniquely and successfully imprinted their products upon America. Huge outdoor billboards, print ads with artistic pictures and very little text, and television ads were firsts in sport shoe marketing, and all clicked for Nike in a big way with the American consumer. If any one factor can be singled out as the key to Nike's ascent and Adidas' fall, it was Nike's astuteness in marketing their products to an image-driven culture.

Adidas was so lost that even having a hit song dropped into their laps was of little help. In 1986, Run-DMC were the first rap group to crossover and have a success on the top-40 charts. "My Adidas" was the kind of genius that 100 ad agencies couldn't have come up with, and a ground swell of rap stars and fans adopted the three stripes as their own symbol. They understood the originality of Adidas and saw it as an antidote to the Nike swooshes on everyone else's feet. But Adidas was slow to respond—dragging their ass on the re-release of the A-15 tracksuit and taking over a year to come out with their Run-DMC model hi-tops. Months and months of precious momentum had been lost.

It was getting difficult to even find Adidas products in stores—shelf space was now almost exclusively taken up by Nike and Reebok. By 1987 things had gotten so bad in the US that a line of sweatshirts with wild designs and Olympic logos were the only popular Adidas product. Adidas had been crushed by Nike. Philip Knight was well on his way to the eccentric billionaire status he enjoys today, in part due to favorable circumstance, in part due to superior marketing, and partially because he had the vision to see Adidas' great vulnerability was the distance between the parent company in Germany and the marketplace in America.

Things got worse. Horst Dassler's untimely death on April 9, 1987 came at the exact opposite moment as the





death of his father nine before—Adi went out on top, Horst departed at the lowest point in the company's history. With the only remaining members of the family being Adi's daughters and grandchildren (Käthe Dassler died in 1984), it was decided to sell Adidas. In July, 1989 the transaction was completed and French investment banker and Minister of Urban Affairs Bernard Taupie bought out the Dasslers' 80% of all Adidas shares for \$305.9 million. That same year saw Adidas operations worldwide result in a loss of a little over \$72,000,000.

But in the same way that the seeds of doom had taken root at Adidas' highest point, the seeds of its rejuvenation were being laid during these bleak days. Rob Strasser and Peter Moore, the creative and marketing genius behind such Nike successes as Air Jordan and Nike Air, had just quit their jobs. Tired of increasing corporate power games and Phil Knight's growing aloofness, the two men set out on their own to develop product lines and marketing schemes for other companies. One of their first clients was Adidas. Strasser and Moore created the Adidas "Equipment" line as the best of Adidas, and it proved to be something Adidas had lacked for almost a decade—a winner. Their tagline for Equipment, "Everything that is essential and nothing that is not" sounded like an edict from Adi Dassler himself.

Indeed, the shoes designed by Adi many years ago proved to be the cornerstone of Adidas' revival. In 1992, skateboard shoe manufacturers Vans and Airwalk were still pushing the clunky hi-top basketball style shoes that suited vert skating, despite street's emergence as the main direction in the sport. Coming back from the annual round of European contests that summer, two of the most influential pros, Natas Kaupas and the young Eric Koston, brought with them

pairs of the Gazelle model which was still part of Adidas' European line. The shoes were lightweight lo-tops with thin soles—perfect to get the feel of the board and freedom of ankle movement necessary to pull off the flip tricks of street skating. It wasn't long before skaters began invading the only place in the US that had Gazelles, their local soccer shops.

With the new school of street skaters recapturing the popularity of '70s-era Adidas models, it was three old school skaters who helped the spark leap from underground to popular culture. The Beastie Boys had been loyal to Adidas since their *Licensed To Ill* days back in '86; Ewing (Adidas' ill-fated response to Air Jordan), Forum, and Concord hi-tops were usually on their feet as the B-Boys stumbled their way through untold quantities of bimbos and beer. By 1992 they had grown out of the turbo-pubesence, and *Check Your Head* was a statement of that growth. A result of the success of *Check Your Head* was the Beastie Boys retro fashion style being emulated by their audience, and Adidas was one of the prime beneficiaries. Some have even pointed out a conspiracy theory regarding the photo on the cover of *Check Your Head*, in which the band's pose bears a curious resemblance to an Adidas trefoil.

By the beginning of 1993, other things began to go right for Adidas. The basketball and running shoes noticeably improved. Distribution in the US—a constant problem area for Adidas since the '70s—was streamlined so successfully that the main Adidas distribution center in Spartanburg, SC won an industry award for their operations. American management underwent a favorable restructuring when the men who created Adidas Equipment, Rob Strasser and Peter Moore, had their Sports, Inc. company bought out by Adidas to create Adidas America. From now on Adidas America would oversee all operations in the US and Canada, and manage worldwide operations in the basketball and Equipment lines. Strasser was made president of Adidas America and given a seat on the parent company's (Adidas AG) board of directors. Bernard Taupie, the Frenchman who had purchased control of Adidas AG from the Dassler family, had run into business setbacks and political scandals and was forced to sell out to a group of European financial institutions headed by Credit Lyonnais, the world's largest



the adidas hotel

As collectors of anything of Adidas, the only promotional item we really couldn't get our hands on was located just north of the factory, but the exorbitant shipping cost prohibited us from ever adding it to our collection. Sportshotel Adidas was erected to house and entertain visiting athletes and shoe diplomats. For \$120 (1978 money) per night, guests could check into the 20 room lodge and enjoy all the amenities of home, and then some—tennis courts, pole vaulting mats, shuffleboard, strawberries and a color television in every room.

bank outside of Japan. The group wisely chose Robert Louis-Dreyfus, former head of the Saatchi and Saatchi advertising agency, as the new chairman of Adidas AG. By the end of 1994, Adidas had increased their share of the US athletic shoe market from about 3% in 1993 to about 5%, a remarkable 64.5% sales increase in a single year. They had gone from number eight to number three in just 12 months. You could walk down the street in any big city and see someone in a pair of Superstars or Gazelles.

Unfortunately, Rob Strasser was not there to enjoy the success. He died of a heart attack on October 30, 1993 while attending the annual Adidas AG sales meeting in Munich. The team he had assembled at Adidas America was suddenly without its leader. Peter Moore, the creative side of the potent Strasser-Moore partnership, was left to shoulder the management responsibilities that were Strasser's forté.

In addition to the unexpected death of Rob Strasser, recent developments have added an air of uncertainty about Adidas resuming success in the US. The running shoe line was supposed to get a big boost from "Tubular Technology," Adidas' first foray into air midsoles. Billboards were already up when Adidas had to recall the model—the air pockets would not hold. The Urban line of footwear got a black eye when the Urban low shoe suffered the same problem Top Ten had back in 1979—being too drastically futuristic for their target consumer. A shoe model in development with an all-hemp upper was given the code name "The Chronic" [later changed to "Hemp"] a full two years after Dr. Dre's album debuted. A small fortune in product was doled out to Ruffhouse Records, whose most prominent artists are Kris Kross, and who just as quickly switched to Nike after the gear supply dried up.

Most distressing is the recent history of Originals, the line which brought Adidas back. With the exception of a horrendous revamp of an old weightlifting boot, the treasure trove of past Adidas models remains unopened. The line still basically consists of the same Superstar, Promodel, Gazelle, Campus and Country models it started with two years ago. In addition to this stagnation, other key decisions involving the Originals line have the unfortunate ring of the late '70s. The patent leather Concord hi-top basketball shoe was mistakenly pulled from the line just as the material was becoming popular, leaving Airwalk to reap the success with their patent leather shoes in 1995. A garish half hockey boot/half Doc Marten was introduced and given the name Street Skater, despite the fact that no skater alive would be caught dead in them.

But 1995 signaled a return of sorts for the three stripes: Originals officially became in hip in mid-year. Madonna wore a pair of Gazelles to the MTV awards. Such astute arbiters of fashion as *Business Week* magazine running stories about the "Generation X-ers" and their shoes of choice. Ever the pirates of American culture, the Japanese began raiding longtime Adidas retailers all over the world for old shoe models and garments. Shoe collectors were driving up the prices; certain models like the ultra sleek Marathon '80 running shoe were being sold in boutiques on the Harajuku (the main fashion district in Tokyo) for \$350 and up. In the short term, the plusses outweighed the minuses, and these developments meant more business for Adidas.

But, this should not be cause for giddy optimism in the boardroom at Adidas AG. Nike futures orders (guaranteed sales) for 1997 are \$4,000,000,000 for the next year. For the last half of 1996, Nike sales are up 55%, led by their once-laughable apparel line, which has



experienced 100% sales growth in the last 12 months. Recently Phil Knight was interviewed on CNN, and much of the talk was about the future. Knight confided that their main goal was to make Nike a global company, and when pressed on just how to do that, the first thing the CPA with an MBA for Oregon mentioned was marketing.

By being so astute at taking the pulse of their marketplace that they now regulate that pulse, Nike succeeded by making the message more prominent than the product. To me, this is what the swoosh has come to symbolize. With a rich and glorious history on their side, the three stripes and trefoil will always symbolize quality, no matter how desperate and confused things may become at Adidas. But it is confusion that will forever prevent Adidas from toppling the current giant, as they were once toppled by that very foe. As it sits here in Herzogenaurach and look at Adi Dassler's first factory building the Adidas complex, the answers seem so obvious to me. Yet I look in the windows and wonder if there is anyone in there who can see out.

*The author would like to acknowledge J.B. Strasser and Laurie Becklund's history of Nike, *Swoosh* (Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1991); an excellent read and a source for some of the details in this article.

the best products of all time

(in no particular order)



adidas

A-15 TRACK SUIT

The first track suit to be accepted by the masses, wearing the A-15 meant you were part of the jogging craze of '76. Sported by swingers like Telly Savalas, Lee Majors, Richard Pryor, Catherine "Daisy Duke" Bach, and Tom Jones.

ADILETE SANDAL

Originally designed for soccer players to wear in the shower, these fantastic footsies quickly made it out of the locker room and liberated millions of common folk everywhere by replacing the toe-spreading flip-flop sandal as the light duty, stain and mildew-resistant shoe of choice. You will now notice every shoe company has a similar product, but like always Adidas was the first.

ROM TRAINING SHOE

The shoe that put Adidas over the top. White-leather-with-sky-blue-stripes, this was a best seller in every corner of the world.

SAMBA TRAINING SHOE

The early '80s were big for soccer in the US. Adidas brought over this black-leather-with-white-striped training shoe and they were an instant hit. Seen on the feet of soccer legends like Franz Beckenbauer, and currently ex-Scream drummer Dave Grohl, proving Samba's crossover appeal is still strong today. The Samba, along with its blue-suede-with-gold-striped cousin, the Stockholm, are the embodiment of quintessential Adidas style.

SL '72 & SL '76 RUNNING SHOES

The classic. With the sleek lines of a formula one racecar, this blue-with-white striped running shoe was one of the first with nylon uppers, and was designed for the 1972 Olympics in Munich. Aside from being enshrined in the Museum of Modern Art in NY, they were also the chosen vehicles of Starksy while out kicking pimp ass on the number #1-rated television show of 1976.

The '76 was the drug version of the '72, and combined the acid-induced color scheme of lime green, optic yellow, and black. The fist-ever speed lacing system only added to their uniqueness. Freaky enough to be seen on the feet of Bob Marley, Keith Richards, and Sly Stone on the cover of his record *You Make Me High*.

TOP TEN BASKETBALL SHOE

Years ahead of its introduction in 1979. The masses couldn't handle these steppers until their numerous innovations were incorporated into the more standard basketball shoe models of the other companies. Seventeen years after their release, Top Tens still hold up, and are considered functional and comfortable on the court.

TANGO SOCCER BALL

For the World Cup in 1978, Adidas was chosen to manufacture the official ball. Realizing that one-quarter of the total population of the earth would be watching, the design staff set out to create a unique ball that could immediately be recognized as Adidas-built, even on the smallest television screen. The ball incorporated a standard 32-panel ball design with graphics that made the surface look like it was composed of large, circular panels. The results were brilliant—and the distinctive Tango could be clearly identified in even the longest camera shots.

THE CLASSIC T-SHIRT

After Adidas first burst in America, this became the symbol of the times. Tight T-shirts with the Adidas name and trefoil across the chest marked a first in the country's fascination with name-brands and the displaying of such as an indicator of status.

MONZA AUTO RACING SHOES

The perfect example of Adidas' German, scientific approach to shoemaking. With Mario Andretti consulting, they created a shoe with velour leather uppers that were completely lined with nomex, designed for three minutes protection from fire. A raised, elevated heel and non-slip rubber outsole worked

CONTINUED ON PAGE-124



The ECD.

"My Mind Feels Better Already."



-Multimedia World Magazine

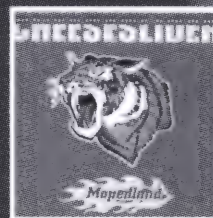
AVAILABLE THROUGH MUSIC RETAILERS EVERYWHERE



YO MAMA LOVES YA, BABY!

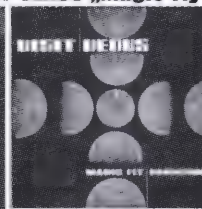
SCHMECKEN!

CHEESESGLIDER „Mopedland“



Grand Funk Revival.
Mindless boogie for
the empty headz.
And you thought
Ike Turner was one
mean dude...

VISIT VENUS „Magic Fly“



VISIT VENUS „Music for space tourism“



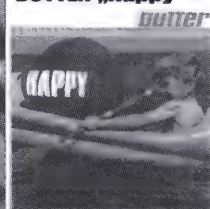
The digital drum + the booming
bass + the sublime sample =
the miracle muzak

CUNNIE WILLIAMS „Love starved heart“



Sweet
california
soul music
like it
should be

BUTTER „Happy“



Wuss
moosick
with a
whomp.
File under:
Pop 2001

Also sucking mama's breast:
FETTES BROT (not to be confused
with the famous Klingonian
breakdance crew),
DER TORI & DAS BO (incredible
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IN MEMORY OF A LIVING



the hard dancin' fast times of jesco white

intro by jake harvey, interview by jamie fraser

In the dark recesses of the hills of Boone County, West Virginia lives a man named Jesse (Jesco) White. Around 1990, the eccentric genius of this Appalachian everyman became the subject of an irreverent documentary titled *Dancin' Outlaw*. Whether viewed as a comedy or a groundbreaking music video, the film has managed to catch the attention of quite a few people. In a mere 30 minutes, this cinematic milestone takes the viewer on an enlightening trip into the lives of people in a forgotten part of America that is shrouded in mystery, folklore, and stereotypes.

From his youthful days as a gasoline and glue-huffing juvenile delinquent to his current life as a gifted and aspiring entertainer overcoming a battle with his own darker side, Jesse tells all. Interspersed throughout footage of his skill in "mountain dancing" (a form of tap dancing accompanied by bluegrass guitar), you hear anecdotal tales of his experiences in jail (with fucked-up tattoos to prove it), his near-death experiences while huffing, the tragic death of his father and mentor, his philosophies about life and love, his "costly shades," the gift of Elvis, and even the way NOT to cook his eggs.

As his wife Norma Jean explains, depending on whether he is Jesse (his loving, caring personality), Jesco (the unpredictable and frequently dangerous personality) or Elvis (whom he impersonates and attributes his recovery from mental illness), his demeanor and stories change to suit. Adding to the fun, Jesse's tales are supplemented by extensive interviews with his mother and a slew of blood relatives who aren't exactly "balanced" themselves.

Originally made as a documentary for West Virginia Public Television Station WPNB, *Dancin' Outlaw* has managed to find its way into the underground world of tape traders and the shelves of video stores specializing in obscure films. Through a network of hardcore fans (including Rosanne Barr) and some minor exposure in coffee-house screenings, *Film Threat* magazine, and Beck's "Loser" video the film has become something of an enigma in the all-too-frequently dry world of documentary films.

The first question frequently asked by *Dancin' Outlaw* virgins is, "Is this for real?" The answer is yes. There are no actors, no

subject, and nobody got paid. According to Julien Nitzberg, the "discoverer" of Jesse and the film's Associate Producer, the story of how this film came to be is just as interesting and unusual as the film itself.

As a recent graduate from film school in New York in 1989, independent filmmaker Julien Nitzberg began an internship with Appalshop, a film studio in Kentucky fiercely dedicated to documenting the culture of Appalachia in a positive light. Julien describes the studio heads as "Hillbilly Black Panthers" who consider *Hee-Haw* offensive in the same way that black people might find *Amos and Andy* offensive. With this in mind, Julien decided to document the career of rockabilly legend and Appalachia resident Hasil Adkins. While filming one of Adkins' live performances at an out-of-the-way bar, Nitzberg overheard a group of women standing in the back yelling profane nonsense. One woman, later introduced as "Flaming Mamie," approached Nitzberg and informed him that she and her friends were on acid. The following weekend, while attempting to locate a missing-in-action Adkins at another club, Nitzberg again ran into Flaming Mamie. After informing him that she and her friends were on acid AGAIN, Mamie invited Julien back to her house to attend a birthday party for her husband, promising the filmmaker "a cake with tits and a pussy on it."

Nitzberg was unable to find Mamie's house that night ("You had to drive through a creek to get to it," he explains), but the following day he and his crew managed to find her once again. Finally down from the acid, Mamie explained that she wanted Nitzberg to meet her brother, Jessie. Being a dedicated documentarian, Julien seized the opportunity to meet a possible new

subject. After watching some taped footage of Jesse's father, D. Ray White (a mountain dancer of considerable local fame), Nitzberg developed a rapport with Jesse and learned of his aspirations to follow in his father's tap steps.

With Jessie in the back of his mind, Nitzberg continued his work with Hasil Adkins for another week, until the singer threatened to kill him in a fit of insanity due to voluntary sleep deprivation. Nearly broke and realizing that he could no longer take the stress of dealing with the deranged Adkins, Julien decided to put the project on hold. In an effort to take his mind off of the Adkins disaster, the filmmaker contacted Jesse and shot some footage of him dancing around his trailer home for a weekend.

Realizing he had stumbled on to something great, Nitzberg returned to Appalshop to show what he had found. But because Jesco White so blatantly represented the negative stereotype of the Appalachian hillbilly, the Jesco documentary was flatly refused financial backing by the shocked studio. Unable to fund the project on his own, Nitzberg sent what little footage he had to his friend and former co-worker, Jacob Young. Young instantly loved it, and despite some initial resistance managed to convince his television station to fund the project. With Young as director and Nitzberg as associate producer, the final product, *Dancin' Outlaw*, was filmed for Young's eclectic public television series, *Different Drummer*.

So, that's the story. Go tell your friends. If you have no clue what the hell this entire article is all about or would like to see some downloadable clips from the film, check out *The Filmzone* internet site (<http://www.filmzone.com>). Just type *Dancin' Outlaw* into

the site's convenient search engine. If you don't have web access, look for the video at independent rental stores. This movie is required viewing, especially after a few bottles of cough syrup.

Jamie: Tell me a little bit about your upbringing.

Jesco: To make a long story a short one, I come from a very poor family. As a young boy up to my age now, I'll soon be 40 years old commin' this July the 30th, I can't remember stuff like the day before yesterday and then I can remember way back but then on the other hand there's times that I can remember way back and I can't even remember what happened day before yesterday. I mean you know it just changes with me like that. I figure there's a lot of people like that but what I'm a saying is all of it ain't really bad, but it seems like in a way there's more bad times with me than good.

Do you remember the first time you danced?

I was very young and I was very little. I'd say about, I don't know four, or five years old. My dad he learned me how to dance. We'd go into the beer joints and his friends would have him dancin'—wouldn't have a penny to his name, time we'd come out of there though the old man be drunker than hell, (laughs) and here all the time he'd be drinkin' this beer you know, a frosty one. I was too young to drink in a beer joint. He would dance for them and they would play the juke box.

I never dreamed of gettin' to be as big as I am now. Like I say I am the poorest movie star and legend that ever lived. But you know, I love it 'cause on one hand at least I'm a legend and I'm still big, but no money

ELVIS



to show for it. Man, that's the part that really hurts, but at least I made it to Hollywood, on the beach.

How much dancin' do you do these days?

Well not too much. Here at the house I carry on a little bit of dancin' for friends just have fun pass time away an all.

Did you ever dance with Hasil Adkins playin' guitar?

Yes I have. I've danced for Hasil plenty of times in beer joints and other places. But we wouldn't get no money, I'd dance for my booze, you know. I'd get drunker than a monkey, all I could hold. I mean we'd rock till closin' time sometimes.

Did your father dance for Hasil?

Sure did. He use to dance for Hasil before I did. My dad knew him a long time before I knew him. He said it's amazing, you're just like your father, he said you dance just like him but he's a little better I believe, which he was. He was the king of tap dancing, in my mind anyhow. I could never out dance him or out think him.

Do you still use your father's shoes when you dance?

Sure do. These shoes are what I do best in. You know my dad done real good in 'em and I also do good in 'em. I'm the only son in my family that filled my father's shoes.

The dancing you do, is it called flat foot dancing?

Well you could call it that. I call it keepin' rhythm. When I dance to bluegrass or banjo I'm like the drums, I'm a part of that band

'cause when I hear pretty guitar music I feel like I gotta move with that guitar. The guy that made the movie of me before, it was his idea to name it the *Dancin' Outlaw*. It was his idea to pick the music for me to dance to. He played the Ozark Mountain Daredevils, so I danced to it, and I got to thinkin' why couldn't it have been a bluegrass music I could dance to cross that bridge, instead of the Daredevils? But it come out good, everybody loves it, like shake rattle and roll across the bridge. I made a 100 foot swinging bridge and that's pretty good at keepin' your balance. That's 'cause I got my dancin' down pat, I've danced half my life. Like I said, you know, in jails and places I've been.

Jailhouse dancing?

A lot of the reason I come to dance in jail is because I worked for my cigarettes. The jailer would come back, he knowed my dad a long time before he knew me, and I would be in there you know like for robbin' a grocery store or breakin' in a store and waiting to go to be sent away for it, and he'd come back there and he'd say "White, hit me off a couple steps and I'll give you one of these factory mades,"—talkin' 'bout the cigarettes, the good ones 'cause we's use ta' rollin' Bugler in there. So I'd hit off couple three steps like a mule kickin' me, and I'd get my cigarettes. He'd bring his buddies and everybody in the bull pen had a cigarette. They all liked me 'cause I danced to get the cigarettes and I shared what I got

with them, it's just like I'd say, one big family. I never had no trouble out of nobody in the whole place. I've had some fights, don't get me wrong, it wasn't perfect. I've had a few bang-ups in my time, outside of that everybody just liked me because I minded my own business and I kept to myself, I kept them mostly entertained tellin' them stories, dancin', we'd all laugh an' all just havin' fun carryin' on, and kept gettin' worser up here (pointing at his head).

Tell me about your singing.

I mostly sing to Elvis Presley tapes. That kind of helps me like a medication 'cause the more I got into it the better I liked it. I was always crazy over Elvis Presley when I was a younger boy watchin' him on TV. Then after I got to singin' with the tapes I was doin' it more than I was smokin' and drinkin', and where I got to feelin' better. It just took the taste, the desire, and everything away. From then on I just started drinkin' coffee, and gettin' into my tapes. I started singin' to my wife, that was to show her, and she told me without doin' drugs for one whole year, I could get an Elvis Presley jacket. Just because it was Elvis Presley on the jacket I done without drugs, and I mean I was a burnt-out addict. I went a whole year, as bad as I was on drugs and alcohol just to get that jacket 'cause it had Elvis on it. I worked hard. I suffered. I done without, and it almost killed me. I had to be a strong brave man in order to get that coat. I was huffin' lighter fluid, gasoline, any type of

thing I could get high on, that's how sick and bad I was on drugs. It's always been a dream of mine, since I was a kid, to own an Elvis Presley suit and some of my dreams have come true. I wouldn't quit Elvis Presley if my life depended on it.

How did you feel when some one approached you to make a film about your life?

I was kindly shocked in a way, a little bit, but after I found out what they were really wantin' I said what could the truth hurt anything, why sure, we'll go ahead and do this on video, sure.

You mentioned you were on MTV. What about that?

Well these people that were helpin' me, convinced me to go ahead and take it, they said that one hundred dollars would help me out a lot for a few seconds on an MTV video, and it will also help the boy in the MTV video for that time and that moment. I said, poor as I was, what do I got to lose since you people are takin' care of me I can't go wrong, sure I'll do it for a hundred dollars. And that helped the MTV company out and the boy that's on there, "Go ahead and kill me baby I'm a loser" whatever that type of song was on the video. They asked me and I felt like I could help in some way, so I did.

This is the management company you told me about, you want to talk about that?

They seen my first video, and they came here. I was here with a friend just sittin' on

some dreams come true...

the porch they pulled up, walked right up here on the porch, and asked me if I wanted to do a birthday party. They said there'd be a little bit of money in it for me. They bought me some new clothes and they gave me hundred and fifty, could have been more I forget, to do a birthday party over in Charleston. So I went and done the birthday party like they asked me, and they took me out to dinner, and brought me back home. I thought that was very nice. I kept gaining their trust, I kept a liking them and they kept drawin' me more to them 'cause they were doin' real good things for me. I just kept on bein' party after party. Before I knew it I was getting a phone call from Tom Arnold, which flipped me clean out, from Hollywood 'cause I thought it was one of my fans playin' with my mind, jokin' with me. He said, "No Jesco I'm not a fan I'm really Tom Arnold from Hollywood. I would like to know how would you like to be a guest on the *Rosanne* show, the TV show". I said, "Man you're serious?" and he said, "Yes Jesco I'm serious," I said, "I'd love it Tom." You know that was a thrill, me bein' a poor person an all. I was psyched after I found out it was really him. So my manager got in contact with him and we flew out to Hollywood where I appeared on the *Rosanne* show, I danced when they ran the end credits. They paid for the dinner and the motel and everything, the limousine come and got us. They were the nicest people. Just what I'm sayin' an' all, they seemed so trustful, these management people, that you couldn't imagine these people could do so wrong.

You want to talk about the money you got?

Oh yeah and [the manager] was takin' care of my mail at the time too. She had coffee cups they were goin' for I believe they were \$5, \$2.50 for badges. They even made statues of me dancin' on a dog house—they told me from the get-go I'd be makin' 50 cents on the dollar, then they came back and told me 50 cent on the doll. Boy that burned me, they even made wood dancin' Jesco dolls. But I got a little money out of that, but not as much as I should have. T-shirts were \$21.95, and she told me all this would be goin' for taxes. So *Rosanne* gave me a \$4,000 check and my manager said as soon as your check comes Jesse I will call you at your house and we'll meet at the GO-Mart and I'll give you your money. When we met at the GO-Mart she gives me \$480 out of a \$4,000 check and hands me the fax letter, and says this is all I get for bein' on the TV show, she said they taxed me in West Virginia and in Hollywood too. I said that all couldn't go for taxes, they can't tax me in two different places like that, and she said they sure did, she said that's show business, you got to pay taxes Jesse.

Is this when you terminated your relationship with this person?

I went ahead and got me a stove and a riding lawn mower for my little farm place here, and steps for my porch here and a pump for my well. I went ahead and spent that before I was ripped off. Man I've been goin' through so much all I can say I'm lucky to be alive, with what little sense I do have left. I waited two weeks on a phone call or a letter from the real Elvis Presley—as much as I'm into Elvis

Presley it disgusted me and hurt me in my heart to know that that man's name was used and I was did that way, and here there was no call from Elvis, no letter—we wrote him a letter with the phone number in it, never got no phone call from Elvis Presley. It was all in her plan to lure me back into show business so she could mentally and physically abuse me and rob me again for my talent. That's the reason I want all my fans and anybody else in this whole wide world to know that's the reason I quit show business. If I rightfully got what was mine I

wouldn't be on welfare or disability. I have been disabled all my life from huffin' gasoline and lighter fluid and the doctors have proved it, but it don't mean I'm crazy. **The lady that ripped you off, has that made it hard for you to trust anyone?**

I don't know if it's jealousy or the likes of makin' money on me or just dislikin' me period, just because of who I am and the different personalities I have. This is hard for me man, you know right now I'm killing mad with myself with knowing that they actually got away with what they did. I didn't choose to be this way, I've got to be this way to live in this crazy world. It's just like when you come here, to do this interview, which you seem like a smooth operator, honest trustin' person, but once you get in behind the walls in to my home, who knows? There been three or four different people comin' into my home with tape recorders hidden under their clothes, taping my wife and my conversations. They want to video my piggpen, my privacy, everything I have left. Jamie, I've been through nine times of hell, I feel like a cockroach in a cigar box, no privacy. This one girl, a fan, comes from the city and asks me how do I flush my toilet? I got a outside toilet, I says there ain't no flushers on an outside toilet. I got a kick out of that.

I'm tryin' to be the honest and goodest person I possibly can without breakin' the law. That's the only way I can see fit to live. Why make it harder on somebody that God has given the gift to use and destroy him instead of help him? That's what was done to me. I don't want you to think I'm mad at you, I just want you to know who I really am—I'm an honest person. No matter what character I play, everybody's got different personalities, but I can control mine like I said. There I was, killin' mad and upset and you see how it went away when Elvis' name was mentioned. I'm two people. I love bein' two people 'cause I know that other person is really helpin' me just like it was God himself. Elvis Presley was a religious person and if he really did die, he's in heaven livin' on, or even if he faked his death, he had to do it on account of what's been done to me now. God says love your neighbor as you love yourself, and that's been my belief since I've been in the world. Even though I am sittin' here a three-personality person, I am a true miracle. I have to be a miracle to still be alive and have this little sanity that I've got left to talk to you in this interview. It would be like bein' in heaven if I could just be myself the way I want to be as a human being.



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Chuckle

The Birth Of A Musical Movement

deconstruction by Peter Relic

Unlike the not-much-of-a-choice two-winged US political system, Americana music provides a plethora of parties one can join. Next time you get one of those Columbia House 47-CDs-for-a-penny mail-in offers (asking you to mark your preferred genre: Top 40, country, hard rock, rap, etc.), compare its options to those available when you duck behind the election booth curtain in November, and you'll find that not only is music more diverse, but it's continually expanding, with new variations and genres popping up all the time, Chuckle being the newest.

Chuckle, you ask, what kind of a name is that? Well, what's in a name? The most important aspect of any musical movement. For even as the music itself is forgotten, the names of musical movements stick in memory's maw: **handbag house** (where spotty British girls went to discos, dropped their handbags on the dancefloor and proceeded to shuffle around them); **Paisley Underground** (a suggestively psychedelic moniker for a bland bunch of peppermint-obsessed '80s revivalists); **trip-hop** (studio boffins with cinematic pretensions tripping over their own genre-hopping cleverness); **Krautrock** (not a petrified hotdog condiment but a bunch of stoned cod-funk Germans so obtusely cool that Julian Cope wrote a book about them); **cuddiecore** (Teddy Ruxpin pajama-wearing bratpunk); and **shoegazing** (musical gauze so wispy in content that its practitioners stared at their footwear rather than dare look at the audience) are all classic examples of movements whose names have outlasted the music that falls under their rubrics.

Grand Royal Editor Mark Lewman (a new father, and thus in the spirit of christening newborns) first suggested the name **Chuckle** to describe the musical mutant previously referred to by pop cognoscenti as **Spikerock**. Since Editor Lewman left few clues as to why, he'd selected this moniker, it's of pivotal importance to our musicological understanding that we review the essence of Chuckle itself. That is, the sound and origin of the variety of laugh from which Chuckle takes its name.

Equal parts genuine mirth and ironic detachment, a chuckle originates in that upper chamber of the chest where anxiety begins its constricting grip and where, uncoincidentally, Chuckle frontmen sing from, as it is the midpoint between the esophagus and the diaphragm, and Chucklers are nothing if not entrenched between rock and pop. Both Chuckle and a chuckle are distinctive yet wholly noncommittal. And, again uncoincidentally, anxiety is a prominent state of being that Chucklers discourse upon in their songs.

Since Chuckle is a middle-ground, a no-man's land meeting place for the rock fan too hard to admit liking sensitive pop and the pop kid too twee to dig throaty vocals and relentless distortion, it's easiest to define the folks who fall just outside of Chuckle, although they possess trace elements of the form: Chuckle is less affected than David Byrne (who giggles), less arty than Thurston Moore (a guffaw man), neither as self-aggrandizing as Billy Corgan (sniveler) nor as arch as Pavement's snickering Steve Malkmus, lacking the stout chortle of Rocket From The Crypt's John Reis, less earnest than Lou Barlow's diarrheal outpouring of love songs, while being classier than Dean and Gene Ween's I.C.D. toilet humor, toothier than Teenage Fanclub's smily confections, and considerably younger than the 40-years-and-a-fuzzbox pastiche of Guided By Voices. Of course, a Chuckler should have at least some sense of humor: when the Rentals' Matt Sharp was asked about the Chuckle quotient of his band, he mirthlessly replied "are you calling my band a joke?"

Only something as fragile as the male ego could produce a genre like Chuckle, where it's okay to be a crybaby as long as one acquiesces to laugh at oneself afterward. Chuckle is also a product of the American temperament: the French are too farty, the British too dry, and Canadians, well, they can Chuckle too, but only by proxy.

Integral to understanding the impulse that produces Chuckle is knowing what induces chuckling in everyday life. "What did one hot dog say to the other?—Hi Frank!" is chuckle-worthy joke. In case of pertinent fact, this "joke" is taken from a series of Dixie Cups called "Chucklers" in the 1970s that had chuckle-inducing comedy printed on the waxy sides.

Regarding the spirit of Chuckle, the biggest influence on Chuckle is the Beatles, the patron saints of any modern tunesmith. From Paul McCartney Chuckle derives its relentless veneer of optimism, from John Lennon its rough edge. In his essential bio *The Secret Lives Of John Lennon*, author Albert Goldman makes the early contention that Lennon sold out as soon as he abandoned the brawling-in-leather style of the Beatles' early days in Hamburg. What Goldman is denying, and what he didn't live to see Chuckle become the post-modern template for, is the notion of the commercial natural.

The commercial natural is precisely what its name implies: a product that at in its inception is untainted by commercial concerns but upon its execution is perfect candy for the consumer sweet tooth. Hence it is welcomed by a large receptive commercial audience. A Chuckle song naturally embodies the same qualities that a product specifically tailored for commercial consumption strives to contain. Thus a song can be unabapologetically commercial since it is completely natural. And so Chuckle epitomizes the oxymoron that the whole sell-out/buy-in notion is based upon. A notion that both art-rockers (who show disdain for pop music as not being arty enough) and musos (who see pop as adolescent and unaccomplished musically) cling to in order to give their own artistic efforts meaning. While they really should realize there is nothing shameful in a heavenly pop hit (a notion first put forward by the Chills' Martin Phillips, a New Zealander who gets honorary Chuckle status). True joy, like sadness, is a simple thing, as heard in song after song by the Beatles band.

However the Beatles may have initially tailored their (specifically Lennon's) artistic sensibilities (their souls, in the abstract sense) to fit the notion of commerciality, soon they were in a position to tailor the public's notion of commerciality to fit their artistic vision (i.e. their souls). Did they take this opportunity? Yes and no. What they did was set parameters for self-expression in a pop idiom, guidelines which have been followed by Chucklers to a T. When the Beatles first began writing songs they were pure tunesmiths, just trying to knock of the popular song styles of the day. Those songs had nothing to do with self-expression. They became successful self-expressionists (artists, that is) by using their brilliant tunesmithery as a rack to hang the wet shirts of their feelings upon. They were laundering their emotions, adding enough melodic starch so that the songs would stand up in a commercial setting (in that era, the radio). Thus the best Beatles songs (and, accordingly, the top Chuckle tunes) have heavy emotion beneath melodic coating. This bit of sweet and sour bridges the difference between pop and high art, rock and roll and poetry. It's so simple you've just got to laugh about it, chuckle in fact, and if you're interested, here's a thumbnail guide to becoming Chuckle:

1) THE GUITAR: Chucklers write their songs on guitar. Pianos are for Stockhausen and Ben Folds. Silvertone, Danelectro and Fender are recommended brands, since their axes are light and Chucklers cannot be musclebound. The guitar should be in-tune, but if you don't know how to tune it, just turn all the pegs until you get cool sounds. This is called an alternate tuning and instantly fills the clever quotient a Chuckle song must have. Okay, plug it in.

2) THE CHORD PROGRESSION: While the simplest songs are three chords (or less), a good Chuckle song has a four chord minimum. Both minor chords and seventh chords are recommended, as they add that bit of tension and move the song a minuscule amount left of conventional. Generally speaking, for every two major chords a Chuckle song should have one minor chord. And for that requisite twinge of melancholy, give your song a bridge with a seventh chord.

3) THE LYRICS: Choose from one of three Chuckle themes: detachment, a girl name She, or some semi-obscure cultural in-joke (NOTE: Chuckle's cultural references cannot predate 1970, which is the earliest possible birth year of any genuine Chuckler). The lyrics should have a touch of whimsy amidst the pain, because Chuckle is supposed to be about unease, not despair. While the lyrics shouldn't be abstract, as long as they're grammatically correct they don't have to mean much of anything.

4) THE VIDEO: Put on some dorkily similar but not quite identical suits, do some out-of-sync lip-syncing, and head for the nearest Buzzbin.

The success of Chuckle as a musical movement is contingent upon the emergence of successful bands willing to wear the Chuckle banner. Lacking those bands, Chuckle may just as soon disappear into the discount bin, where copies of the music press yellow with numbing alacrity. And yet, this is, to be sure, an abridged version of the Chuckle Manifesto. Further installments may well be appear as the movement gains momentum and commercial dominance. Get ready, join the Movement, 'cause here come the Chucklers: it's just a matter of time before they get their own category in the Columbia House mail-in offer.

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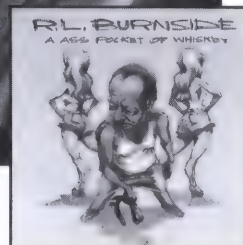
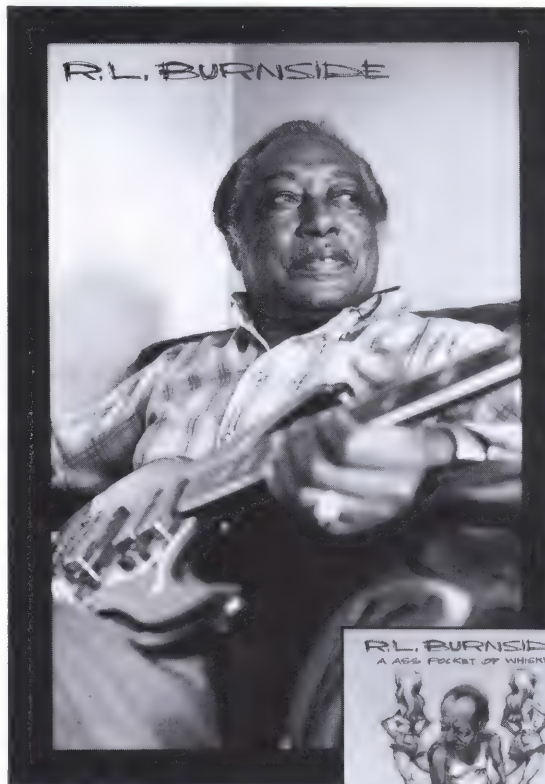
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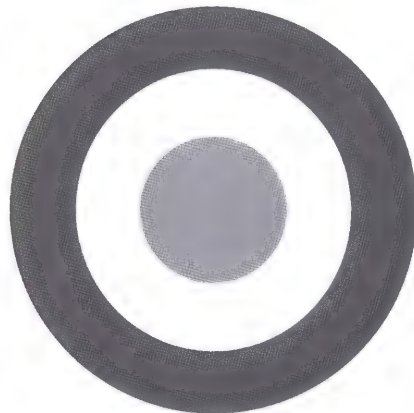
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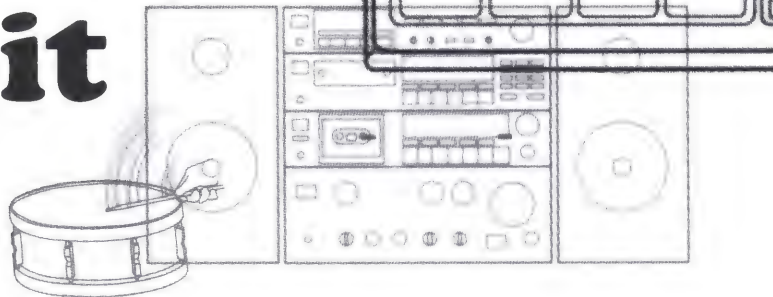
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SPRAY IT don't say it

BY: JOEY GARFIELD



Human beat boxing was born out of need for stark effectiveness in time of crisis (when a battle arose) or financial destitution (when the batteries in the JVC died). The early wizards quickly manipulated this low-maintenance organic device beyond the simple 4/4 metronomic beat and inspired others to pick it up and spit it out, until it had spread through high schools and into living rooms in the mid-'80s.

Straight up, there would be no beat boxing if it wasn't for Doug E. Fresh. With his vast repertoire, Doug E. made noises that not only came from his mouth but out the side of his neck, inventing and defining what's known today as human beat boxing. On the strength of such rap classics as the seminal "Jut Having Fun", "The Show", and "La-di-da-dee", Doug E. Fresh and his partner MC Ricky D (Slick Rick) rose to the forefront of Hip-Hop, and with them, human beat boxing blew up in '85.

When I asked him in his estimation when beat boxing started, Doug E. simply answered, "when I was nine. Walking home from school [late '70s] there were no Walkmans, so I did it myself. I did it as a joke at first, waiting between record changes at a show. The response was overwhelming. It blew peoples' minds. My father always says to me 'Do you really realize what you created? You built a whole area of Hip-Hop that was never there before.'"

Once Doug E. was recognized, the natural progression was to take it to the next level. "It's beyond beating like the record, it's a spiritual thing. Carrying sound. Taking people on a journey through sound. I feel everything around me, and let others into it. When I do it, people are locked into what I'm doing and when somebody rhymes along with me, we're locked into each other." Doug E. proceeds to give me my own personal journey over the phone: EPMD's "It's My Thing" into Craig Mack's "Flavor In Your Ear" into Africa BamBaata's "Planet Rock" into Notorious B.I.G.'s "Big Poppa" and finishes me off with—are you ready?... "Tour De fuckin' France" by Kraftwerk.

As I recover from the barrage, he continues waxing nostalgic: "I learned from the masters; Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, Busy Bee, Hollywood, The Treacherous Three—watching everything that happened to them. I absorbed what made them great and also where they didn't succeed."

The rise of Doug E. Fresh in the beat boxing forum was not only his ability to replicate beats but to create his own sounds. His "clicks", which resemble electric castanets, have become a personal trademark. "I don't know how the click comes from inside me but I did it to my kids when they were little and now they know how to do it."

In his song, "The Show," Doug E. Fresh clarifies to the listening audience that he is "known for the (clicking style of beat boxing) and not for the (back throaty 'Uhuhuh') style, ala one of beat boxing's other forefathers, a man who so completely encompassed the musical form that his name has become synonymous with it; Darren Robinson, aka The Human Beat Box.

Doug E. Fresh gave beat boxing its street credibility, but back in the day, no rap group or crew celebrated the talents of a beat box better than The Fat Boys. The Human Beat Box (also known as Buff) had the Charlie Parker-like freedom to bust out solos during songs. "We never had a DJ, so we said 'Do what you do, show 'em what you're about,'" Notes Kool Rock-ski. "What Buff was about was simple: Raw, beat power crossed with a sea lion trying to mate with an NBA half-time buzzer."

Beat boxing started for The Fat Boys in 1981 when they were in junior high. "We were banging beats on lunch tables and rhyming, but Buff would start doing it with his mouth. He would imitate break beats we heard in the parks. We couldn't believe it." As they were gaining popularity and becoming established, other rappers would challenge them in an attempt to conquer their hard-earned Kangol crowns. When the battles got intense they knew just how to turn up the heat. "Buff was our secret weapon. He was too powerful. People were like 'I can't mess with that.'"

With a million watts of power coming out his mouth it was only time before The Human

Beat Box and Doug E. Fresh met mouth to mouth. "We were both doing a show in '86 for like 1,600 people," Kool Rock-ski remembers, "[Doug E.] was first and did 'La-di-da-dee'. He was beat boxing afterwards, too, and taking a long time to get off stage, and that hyped Buff up. So he went up on stage and they started [battling]." Though Kool Rock-ski and Doug E. Fresh both point out that any rivalry between the two was a friendly one, as far as who came out the winner that night, Kool Rock-ski says, "in my opinion, and not just 'cause I'm down with him, Buff won. I'd never seen him so focused. He put his heart into it, showing that this was no joke."

Kool Rock-ski also notes that "not until *after* our first single, "Fat Boys"/"Human Beat Box" [from which "Brrr Stick 'Em" originated] came out did we even *hear* of Doug E. Fresh—it was at the Roxy. People would say, "Yo Doug E. Fresh is better than him," and we were like "well who the hell is Doug E. Fresh?" Major props to Kool Rock-ski, by the way, for eating in my ear during our phone conversation.

Obviously Doug E. has a different response to who was the original human beat boxer: "Everyone knew who [I] was in New York City. Everybody knew I was beyond what [Human Beat Box] did. I was the creator. He did a piece of what I started."

Buffy is not here to dispute Doug E.'s claims. Tragically, on December 10th, 1995, Darren Robinson died of cardiac arrest in his home, moments after performing for a final audience of one, his brother Curt.

Though beat boxing's origins may seem a little hazy, what is crystal clear is the two drastically different styles that emerged. Doug E. Fresh gives you a five-sound five-layer cake of percussion while, as Kool Rock-ski puts it, "[Human Beat Box] was more bass, snare and power." The other beat box driving force at the time, Biz Markie [see next page], gained legend for his incorporation of words into the beats, ala "A One Two".

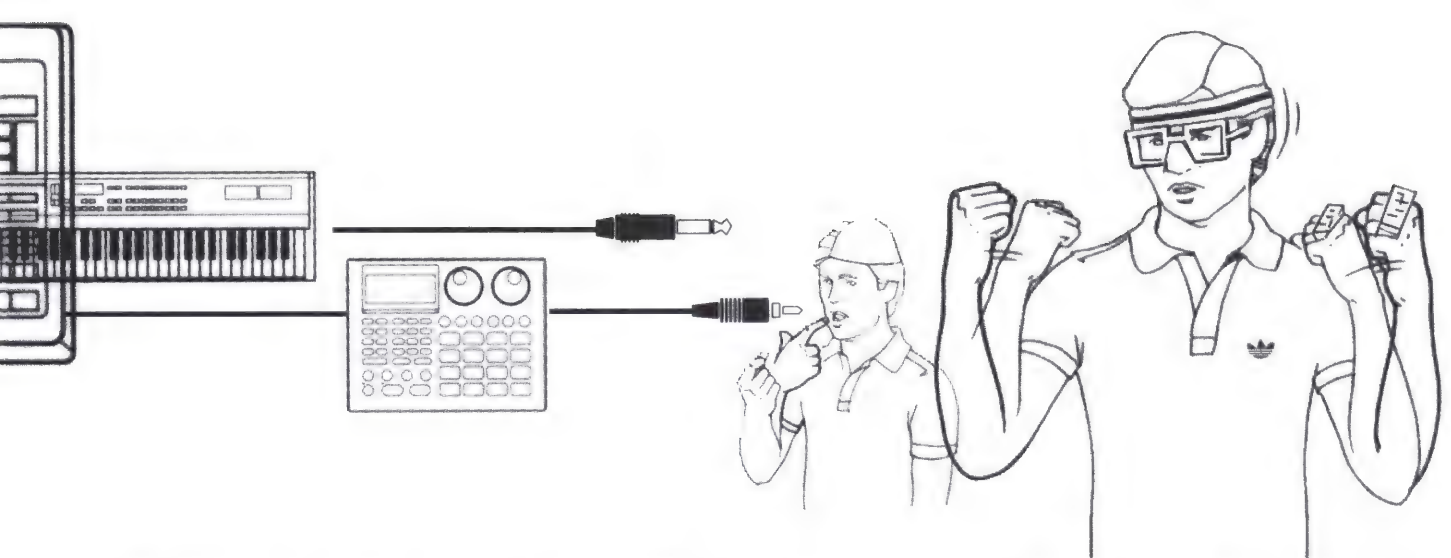
With all these talented people throwing down, why is beat boxing still looked on as a side order to the Rap sandwich and never its own main dish? Doug E. Fresh points out that "People don't give it much recognition 'cause you can't just do it. Only few can *really* get down. Every rap act has done the beat box at one time or another, but not everyone and has done it good."

Yet there are those who have stuck it out, whose skills in the trade has beat boxing reaching a new level. Enter Rahzel: The Godfather of Noise, from the group The Roots. I met up with him at Geffen Records where he was in preparation for his solo album, and Rahzel was more than happy to express his feelings on beat boxing's niche in music. "I don't think [beat boxing] gets enough respect from people referring to [Hip-Hop's] history. People talk about the break dancing and the DJs and the MCs but they never mention the kids that be doin' the beat box. You can't say it didn't have its place—it *does* have its place and cats is still doing it. People are still going 'How the hell you do that!?' To me everybody's rhyming and everybody's DJing but there's only a handful of talented people that can really beat box."

Though his talents make him seem more machine than man, for Rahzel to remain among that handful takes more than just natural abilities, "I practice ritually everyday, in the morning I be doin' my thing, in the shower, in the kitchen, even on the train." His style has an authentic, musically mean feel to it. Rahzel can fuck it up, producing noises that sound like the scratch of a needle on record, and if you don't catch it at first, he can even rewind. The dude is real deal vacuum sealed, a vocal perfectionist.

As a kid, growing up in Queens, Rahzel had an early introduction to the culture of Hip-Hop and a heavy injection of raw beats. "I would go to the park jams in The Bronx and just listen and try to imitate Flash. I heard The Fat Boys when they were the Disco Three in Brooklyn at a park jam. I heard them rhyming on the mic and I hear this beat but I don't see no turntable and I'm like 'where's it coming from?', and it's Buffy, and everybody was going crazy. I'm thinking to myself, 'somebody's doing what I'm doing!' When they blew up I was like, these are the same guys from the park and people said, 'Yo I think you're better than them, you should pursue it.'"

"I started concentrating on different music, listening to more jazz and R&B. I'd play a



the evolution of human beat boxing

record and try to duplicate it to a tee. I take from everywhere: Michael Winslow (of *Police Academy* fame), Bobby McFerrin, from different genres, effects, movies, everything. I was able to expand on what I did cause I never put a limit on where I got my resources from. You can't just do a beat, you have to be able to do somebody's record; The bass line, the bass drum, the snare, the high hat, the guitar, the horns, plus have a lil' something extra." I asked for an example and what I got in return was a vocal beating where Wu Tang Clan meets Mortal Combat and together they kick my ass. As the smoke is clearing, but before I can say "Witty Unpredictable Talent And Natural Gain," Rahzel drops "Scorpion wins!" and all that's left is a mental picture of me face down, nose bleeding, and the words "game over" flashing above my remains. "Everyone can relate to Wu Tang and Hip-Hop and everybody plays Sega or Nintendo so I brought the two different worlds together," he shrugs.

I ask Rahzel if he's ever done battle. "The one that will always stay in my mind is when I had a battle with Shockbox [of recent Coca-Cola commercial fame]. We had a battle beat-for-beat for a good 45 minutes to an hour. This was at the Zodiac in The Bronx. This particular night was a star-studded affair; Big Daddy Kane, Biz Mark, Cold Crush Brothers, Grand Wizard Theo, Grandmaster Flash, everybody. Grandmaster Caz was hosting. My cousin knew some of the guys at the club and he was trying to get me on the mic. They was like 'You can get on the mic but you gotta battle Shockbox to do it.' That was the deal. I wasn't expecting something like that."

"Everybody knew Shockbox 'cause he performed there on a weekly basis. Nobody knew me. I was the underdog. So I get on the mic first and do my thing and he traded off a beat. My thing is, I always had a plan in my mind, ya know, from battling all these other people, so I always start off with the most easiest and every beat after gets more complicated. When it got to my most complicated sound he was lost. It was this big build up and he really wasn't ready for that."

What was the final KO blow that won the battle? Rahzel humbly admits, "It was 'Moments In Love' by Art of Noise." Believe that." Biz does the 'one, two,' Doug E. has the clicks and the Fat Boys with the 'Uhuhuh' but nobody was doing nothing slow! So that became my stamp."

Even though the world of Hip-Hop revolves around the MC and the DJ, a human beat box has advantages over both of them—a beat box doesn't have to haul crates of records from show to show or worry about clearing samples, never feels the pressure of having to come up with words that rhyme, and without being hindered by language, beat boxers have the ability to reach a more universal audience as well as travel within the music world. "I performed in Africa," Doug E. Fresh points out, "there was a click tribe there and some had seen what I did and it fucked them up. I did African rhythms on top of that with a harmonica adding the melody in a way that is amazing, by breathing in and blowing out I take it to the next level. 'Cause I can do beyond Hip-Hop. I do jazz, reggae, club, house, R&B, country, whatever." When you are your instrument and you have no limits, and get to experience a sense of freedom few can share.

"To me," mentions a very excited Rahzel, "it's a universal language 'cause it's not hard to comprehend. I had the opportunity to perform with this group in Italy called the 'Voce Attroce' (Atrocious Voices) They approached me at the [Roots] show and they was like 'we never seen nobody like you.' They do more melody and sound effects—cows and cowbells. It's a whole new level. There's also a group from Cuba called 'Vocal Sampling'. They do Salsa, all vocals—steel drums and everything! I made a tape for them so they could listen to me and the response I got from them was they were blown away, they can't believe it's one person. And it's six of them!"

Ten years after the commercial and cultural boom days of beat boxing, the word "represent" gets kicked around in Hip-Hop like a hacky sack. Beat boxers have been "representing" from the start—they celebrate rap music by *being* rap music. Who's checking that? What it all comes down to is everyone has a mouth; it is what one does with that mouth that counts. Some talk sense, others to talk shit, and some don't speak at all.

They spray.

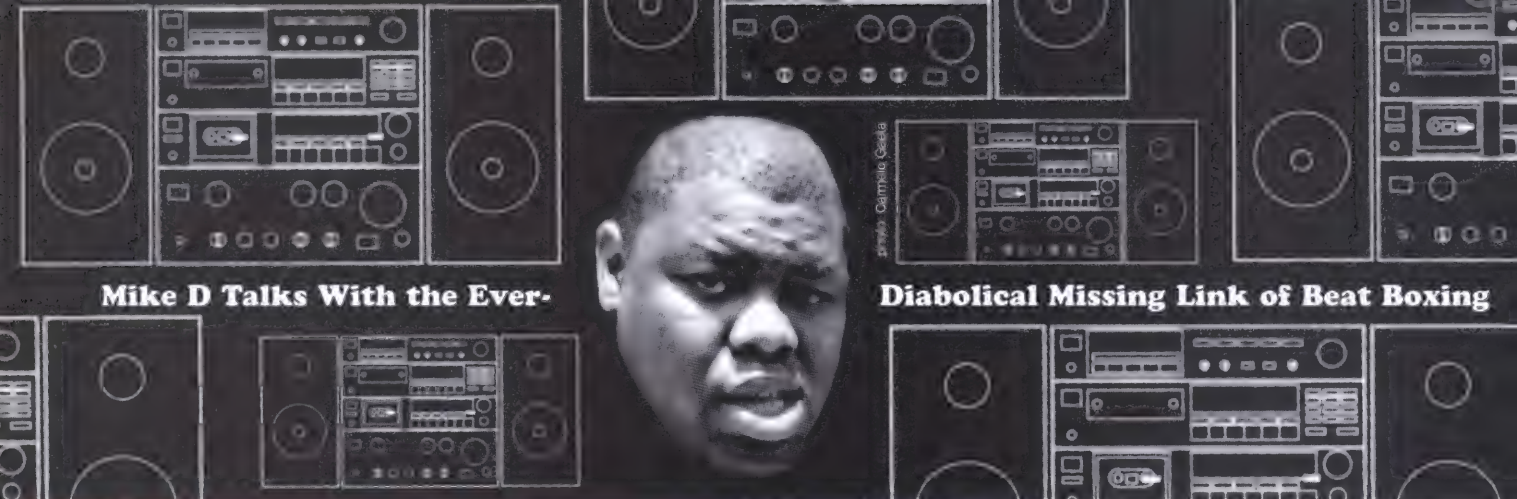


Rahzel unplugged.

BEAT BOX RESOURCES

["Just Having Fun" Doug E. Fresh] ["Bite It" UTF0] ["Inspector Gadget" Bad Boys] ["Nuthin'" Doug E. Fresh] ["3 Minutes of Beatbox" T La Rock featuring Greg Nice] ["Back to Burn" T La Rock, Mantronik, and Greg Nice] ["We're Called Whistle" Whistle] ["EZ Mo Bee" Bad Boys, featuring Doug E. Fresh] ["Hit It Run" Run-DMC] ["The Def Fresh Crew" Roxanne Shante and Biz Markie] ["Oh Veronica" B Boys] ["Latoya" Just-Ice and Human DMX] ["A One Two" Biz Markie] ["Faye" Stetsasonic featuring Human Mix Machine Wise] ["Make The Music" Biz Markie] ["Rock The House" Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince with the Human Linn Drum Ready Rock C] ["The Show"/"La-di-da-di" Doug E Fresh and Slick Rick] ["Fat Girl" Eazy E] ["Beat Box Is Rocking" Fat Boys] ["Human Beat Box" Disco 3] ["Jockbox" Skinny Boys featuring Human Jockbox] ["Gangster of Hip Hop" Just-Ice and Human DMX] ["Make The Music With Your Mouth, Biz" Prince Biz Markie] ["Triple Threat" Z 3 MCs] ["P.L.A.Y." Doug E. Fresh] ["Take A Bath" Beggin' Billy] ["Biz Beat" Biz Markie] ["Freaks" Vicious, featuring Doug E. Fresh] ["The Lesson, Part 1" The Roots] ["Great Pretender" The Roots] ["? vs. Scratch" The Roots]

The films: *Disorderlies* (Fat Boys), *Beat Street* (Doug E. Fresh) and *Krush Groove* (Fat Boys)] [To hear a Real Audio sample of Rahzel tearing it up, point your web browser to www.grandroyal.com]



Mike D Talks With the Ever-

Diabolical Missing Link of Beat Boxing

From the mouth of Biz Markie

Mike: So who was the first beat box you ever saw?

Biz: Truthfully? Jesse D.

Mike: Jesse D?

Biz: (laughing)

Mike: Who's that?

Biz: From the Force MCs.

Mike: Oh, okay. Staten Island style.

Biz: Or the guy from, the first human beat box that I heard, was the guy from Chaka Kahn.

Mike: Oh, Oh, on "Tell Me Something Good"?

Biz: Right or wrong.

Mike [imitates beat]: When you first heard that kid, though, did you try to human beat box?

Biz: Oh yeah. I was always doin' it since I was little.

Mike: Trying to imitate sounds or trying to imitate beats?

Biz: I had a crew called the Midnight Express Crew. So if we went to Downstairs Records, I'd say ya'll want that record that goes like this [busts a few beats]. Know what I'm talkin' about, right? Or I want this record [breaks a few more beats] Right? And they'll give me the record. One time my man's system went out, something happened with the turntables, and I did the beat boxing and he rhymed over me. I was doing it for like three hours. And ever since then I've known I could do it.

Mike: That was the first time you performed as a human beat box?

Biz: Yeah, that was back in 19...82.

Mike: '82, damn. So that was before "The Show" or any of that.

Biz: I met Doug E. in '83. Mike and Dave, we'd have parties. You know Mike and Dave from Crash Crew?

Mike: Mm hmm.

Biz: We'd throw parties and he came out to Long Island. He was great.

Mike: Doug E. Fresh is Queens, right? No, he's uptown. He's Harlem, right?

Biz: Yeah. The first one to have it like a whole a show of it, like all in show, was Doug E. Fresh. Him, he was nice. Rahzel from Queens is nice. MNR was nice. That kid Doug taught named Richie Rich was super nice. Then there was a couple niggas like Darryl D, and a couple guys. There was a kid from like, I don't know his thing, but he was from the West Side. The projects by 60th street? He was nice 'cause he used to do beats and never open his mouth.

Mike: Never open his mouth? How'd he do it?

Biz: I don't know but he was NICE. He used to [beat boxes out *Addams Family* theme] but would have his mouth closed and the beat and everything came out.

Mike: What was the first record that you did the beat box on? Was that Roxanne Shante, the Pop Art joint?

Biz: Yeah, you could say that. I did a record with these kids called the Bopsy Twins, I forget the name of them, but the first record you could say was Shante.

Mike: What was the name of that song?

Biz: "Def Fresh Crew."

Mike: So that was the beginning. How'd you go to Cold Chillin' and that, after that?

Biz: I did a record, well, Ty and Marley and them brought me to Cold Chillin'. 'Cause I was boxing a lot of different people. I did some stuff at one time, I used to be with LL. Like, used to be in his basement just buggin' out. I was right there when he wrote "Rock The Bells" and all that.

Mike: Yeah, back when we knew L. You know

who wrote the beat for "I Need A Beat"? The "I Need A Beat" beat?

Biz: Who?

Mike: Adam.

Biz: Huh?

Mike: Adam. Adrock.

Biz: You lyin'.

Mike: That's his beat. It's kinda like the Jimmy Spicer beat, but he flipped it up a little different.

Biz: Seriously? He wrote it? Then why'd he get no credit?

Mike: He's on it. If you look on the record, on "I Need A Beat" it says A. Horovitz, whatever. No bullshit.

Biz: I didn't know that.

Mike: What's the next breakbeat that no one has freaked human beat box yet?

Biz: "Funky Drummer".

Mike: No one's beat boxed "Funky Drummer"?

Biz: Who?

Mike: Hey, I don't know, but you're the one who should know. How about you?

Biz: I could do it, but I'm just sayin'. Who's keepin' it alive right now is Rahzel.

Mike: Yeah, definitely. I've seen Rahzel completely rock whole shows human beat box. He does everything, though. He does horns, he does whole songs.

Biz: Yeah, I used to do that. But then I evolved into something else (diabolic laughter).

Mike: When'd you start doing the sounds, on top of the beats? Like you know how you do "Rocket In The Pocket" and "Catch A Groove" and all that.

Biz: I wanted to be different—way different—and so I just stated doing sounds. Another beat box that was way dope was DMX.

Mike: That kid who was down with Just-Ice.

Biz: Yeah. And another kid I know named Art of Noise, named Mikey. He was super nice.

Mike: Yeah. Rahzel told me about him.

Biz: I taught him and DMX. I taught both of them.

Shockbox is kinda nice too, I can't forget him.

Mike: What do you think's like the future of human beat boxing?

Biz: The future of human beat box is different, see, rap is different now. Rap ain't rap no more, it's a fashion show now. If rap get back to rap, then people could get back into human beat box. If human beat box was Versace, then they'd be into it (laughter)—beat boxing with gun sounds.

Mike: I hear what you're saying. There's probably Jamaican kids that do that too—do you have a beat box with mad gun sounds?

Biz: It ain't really nothing to really do. Only thing I'm saying, the only reason human beat box faded out a little bit is 'cause everybody tried to do something else. Oh yeah.

another beat box that's nice is Greg Nice.

Mike: From Nice N Smooth?

Biz: Yeah, he was a beat box first.

Mike: See, I didn't even know.

Biz: Heall yeah he was nice.

Mike: How about MC Smooth B?

Biz: He wasn't no beat box.

Mike: What about when you got into it, and came out with the Biz Mark Dance and all that?

Biz: I evolved.

Mike: That dance came after the beat box?

Biz: I always dance. Always.

Mike: And what was the idea when you came out of nowhere with the Biz Dance? People must've bugged out, 'Cause they'd never seen anything like that, right?

Biz: True. When I did the Biz Dance, everybody around the way used to do it. "Go ahead, do that dance..."

Mike: So that was a big dance from your neighborhood?

Biz: Yeah. My dance, that only I could really do. People try to imitate it but they can't.

Mike: What was peoples' reaction when you came out with the Biz Dance?

Biz: They couldn't believe it. They was buggin' out. Like I bugged out when ya'll came out, 'cause your beats was so mean when you came out with your album [*Licensed To Ill*]. Who came up with the beats on your album?

Mike: All of us, really. Rick did a bunch, Adam did a bunch. We all did.

Biz: Who did...[busts a few bars of "Paul Revere"]?

Mike: That backwards 808? We had...if I think right, it was actually Joe, Run, from Run-DMC. It was his idea to flip the tape up. He was there, like, "Hey, y'all should flip the tape around so that shit's backwards". Either that, or we had it on backwards and he heard it, he bugged out, and that's when he said, "Y'all have to do a story rhyme over the shit". And he came in started writing the shit with us. What about, you ever do the "Paul Revere" beat?

Biz: Yeah. And I did "Brass Monkey". But my favorite record is [sings] "Let it flow, let yourself go, slow and low, that is the tempo..." Who did that?

Mike: That beat? That was Rick's beat.

Biz: The way you're all rhymin' over Led Zeppelin, "When the Levee Breaks".

Mike: Yeah. We did that shit before we had a sampler. We made a tape loop. What about, you think dances are coming back? Like you do the Biz Dance, but around that time dancing was more visible and intertwined with hip-hop.

Biz: Dances really ain't... 'cause it's about money now. It ain't about partyin' no more. Only on the college circuit it's about partyin'. Everybody want be Big Willie, instead of partying.

Mike: That's true, that's very accurate.

Biz: And it loses the essence. That's why I liked doin' the shows with you. It brings back the party essence. Like how we did the Garden. Or how we did the thing, the Freedom Tibet?

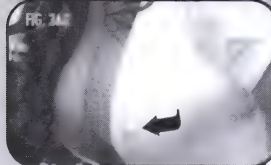
Mike: Yep.

Biz: It's that essence. And you can't get, I hate to say it, but you can't get 50,000 black people together like that. They don't know how to act. They gonna try to come out there with their best on. "You stepped on my shoe, man..." That's why I like to DJ now, 'cause even if you do got a hit record out, where you gonna play at? That make sense?

Mike: Yeah, I know what you're saying. That's fucked up. Now, before we finish up, what's your theory as to what happened to beat boxing?

Biz: Beat boxing is just like having a dance album. I remember when I was a beat box, everybody tried to beat box, from girls to guys, to grown men. But the reason that beat box really stopped evolving, and it's sad to say, is because everybody's so cool these days. Too cool.

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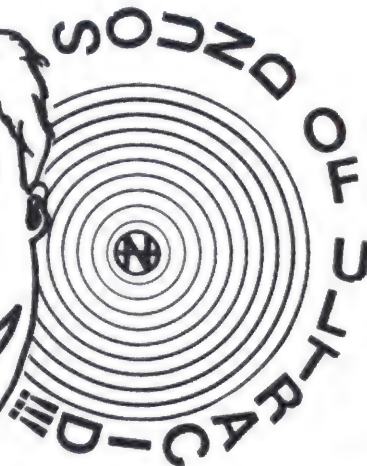
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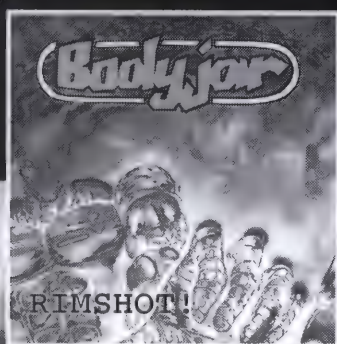
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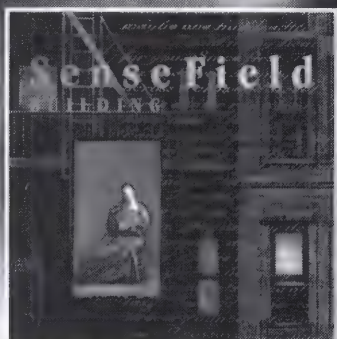
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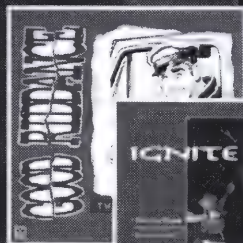
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Brian King takes a closer look at the legacy and history of the original maverick publishers of street literature

HOLLOWAY IN THE HOUSE

"The height of elegance is to create harmony in bad taste." —Jean Genet

That being the case, then Holloway House, a publishing company based in Los Angeles, is quite elegant. Publishers of literature (thereby hopefully excluding manufacturers of diet books, computer software manuals, Garrison Keillor and Spalding Gray collections, etc.) are mostly satisfied with literary "product," whether it is the latest slacker pop novel packaged like a CD or yet another 1000-page tome by a pretentious chunk of flotsam (Norman Mailer, anyone?). Holloway House, however, has been, for over 30 years, the refined purveyors of an extraordinary literature of Trash Aesthetic that has been read by millions of readers—they have produced books that have become, against great odds, notable contributions to our culture that go way beyond the boundaries of "good taste."



Most essential—the House has been the home of all the novels written by two of the three greatest black writers, Iceberg Slim and Donald Goines (the third writer is Chester Himes, author of the fantastically absurdist Harlem detective series featuring Coffin Ed and Gravedigger Jones: *Cotton Comes to Harlem*, *The Crazy Kill*, *The Real Cool Killers*, *A Rage in Harlem*—and, especially, *Pinktoes* [his hilarious "erotic" novel] plus *If He Hollers*, *Let Him Go* [Himes' semi-autobiographical LA novel].) Kept continuously in print by Holloway, the "black experience" (a term perpetually employed by Holloway's marketing staff) books of Iceberg Slim and Donald Goines are usually not found on the shelves of your local Barnes & Noble, but yet have managed to be available to an intrigued, vast audience through sales at newsstands, markets, and independent bookstores in mostly

☐ HH-108, 75c

black areas. I happened upon my copy of Slim's *Pimp* at the newsstand at Cahuenga and Hollywood.

Before they discovered and tapped into the black experience, Holloway House was initially known for its exuberantly sleazy books in the early and mid-'60s. Their first book was an exploitation news quickie entitled *The Trial of Adolf Eichmann*, a blow-by-blow account of the Nazi war criminal's forced "extradition" by Israeli intelligence agents from Latin America and his subsequent trial and execution. Later offerings were mostly within the realm of adult erotica/humor/reportage and Hollywood gossip, and included such essential reading list material as *The Best of Adam*, a compilation of articles and cartoons from a '60s men's "stag" magazine billed as "the man's home companion."; *Jayne Mansfield's Wild, Wild World*, (supposedly by Jayne

☐ HH-110, 75c

JAYNE MANSFIELD'S WILD, WILD WORLD

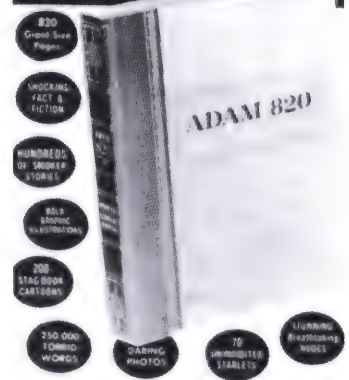
World's biggest sex symbol reveals truth for first time! Her affairs, her life with Mickey, her intimate secret views on sex, men, nudity, her hopes, fears and need for success. A wild, amazing autobiography by a sensualist a little girl in a beautiful voluptuous body. Includes choice nude photos that shocked the U.S.



NEW!

Mansfield and her husband, body-builder Mickey Hargitay); *The Many Loves of Casanova*, a mass-market retooling of *The Memoirs of Casanova* into a two-volume paperback set; *Prostitution USA* by Mike Bruno and David B. Weiss, from 1965.

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Read the "revelations" about "those sick-sick-sick teen queens who play 'breadsies' because it's 'ginchier' than 'freebies'" and "the mobile magdalens who electrified that General Electric convention!"

The best of the bunch from this period, however, has to be the saddest, most depressingly camp Hollywood autobiography ever written:

☐ HH-108, 75c

I AM NOT ASHAMED by Barbara Payton

Depraved, shocking, true story told in her own words! Hollywood's hottest star sold her body for success—white, Negro, men, women! She names people, places, dates. A slave to sex and drink she can now up 'had for \$5 a night. Hard, cruel, stripped raw—most torrid book about Hollywood ever written. Includes photos!



NEW!

I Am Not Ashamed, scribed in 1963 by the doomed '50s starlet Barbara Payton. Imagine Dostoyevsky's *Notes from Underground* if it was written in a skanky single apartment off Sunset Blvd. by a gone-to-seed alcoholic Hollywood harlot, selling blowjobs for gallons of Rosé wine. A sampling:

I know I'm an old coot now—dragged out, wine-soaked, prey for men's five dollar bills. I had a body when I was a young kid that raised temperatures wherever I went. Today I have three long knife

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THE BEST OF ADAM, Ashley

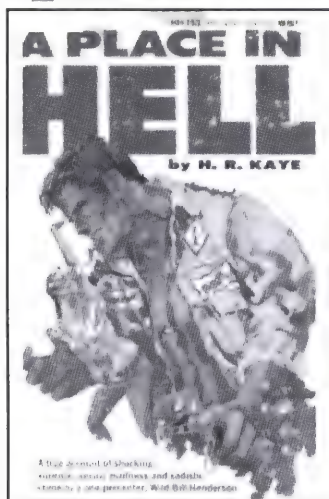
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wounds on my solid frame and the little money I do accumulate to pay the rent comes from old residuals, poetry and favors to men. I love the Negro race and I will accept money only from Negroes. Does it all sound depressing to you? Queasy? Well, I'm not ashamed.

According to Bentley Morriss, a VP in marketing at Holloway, part of the deal the publishing house had with Payton was that they gave her a case of wine for her to pick up at the Coach & Horses bar (still located on Sunset Blvd.) as a "bonus" to help her along while she told her incredible story.

One of the reasons Miss Payton made such a shockingly fast decline: she was hopelessly in love with Tom Neal, the B-movie star of *Detour*, a brilliantly brutal, surrealistic, nihilistic film noir made on apparently no budget by director Edgar G. Ulmer. Passionate even by Hollywood's standards, exhibitionists Payton and Neal clawed and fucked their way into the annals of Hollywood gossip in the early '50s. Their shit really hit the fan when Payton decided she was going to marry actor Franchot Tone to piss Neal off. The brawny Neal responded by beating Tone into a bloody pulp on the front lawn of Payton's home. After spending ten days in the hospital recovering from his injuries, Tone married Payton and settled down with her for a long seven weeks until their divorce; the resultant headlines

pretty much destroyed her career.

After *I Am Not Ashamed* was released, Payton and Neal's story got even sadder. Tom Neal became a "landscape architect" in Palm Springs, married a woman who immediately succumbed to cancer, then married again to a beautiful young receptionist from the swank Palm Springs Tennis Club. Things were going well until police were called to his home on the morning of April 1, 1965. They found Neal's wife, Gail, dead on the living room couch with a .45 caliber bullet in her head; Neal was convicted that December of involuntary manslaughter and died after serving some hard time at Soledad State Prison. Barbara Payton was found dead at the age of 39 on the bathroom floor of her parents' home in San Diego—supposedly of "natural causes."

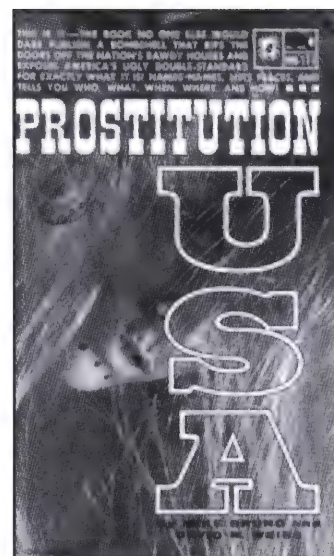
Business was brisk for Holloway House, but it got much,

OTHER BOOKS YOU'LL ENJOY

much better when a black ex-convict and former hustler/pimp, Robert Beck, sent the unsolicited manuscript of his first book, *Pimp: The Story of My Life*, to Holloway House in 1967. Born on August 4, 1918, Beck had lived his life until then as a Player's Player in the world of hustle and muscle and ressin' & dressin', a pimp who was so ice-cool and stone-cold gorgeous that his nickname (and later his writing pseudonym) on the street was "Iceberg Slim." He beat his whores with metal coat hangers and enjoyed *The Life*—he later wrote that he "just rested and dressed...and petted my dog and ate chocolates and slept on satin sheets...and went to the penitentiary periodically." He decided to become a writer—to become "square"—because he was tired of prison; he also wanted "to dispel the myth that street niggers are devoid of intellect...I am of superior intelligence." That he

was; his seven novels expertly defined black street culture in a way that has never been equaled. Uncompromising in their raw, reflective honesty, Iceberg Slim's books are also comically peppered with the usage of '60s black urban vernacular; the glossary at the back of *Pimp* informs the reader that "hard leg" is "an older, street-hardened used-up whore," a "hog" or a "kitty" is a Cadillac, a "jasper" is a lesbian, and "derby" is "oral copulation." A major influence on everything from rap and hip-hop to blaxploitation film (his novel *Trick Baby* was itself made into a film in 1972), Slim's books also became best-sellers in England and Europe after his death in 1992.

After Holloway House published *Pimp* in 1967, the company made a conscious decision to "fill a niche left untouched by the majors that could be fruitful." The Holloway staff, feeling a newfound "affinity with the black community," shopped for new talent at workshops, UCLA classes, etc. Donald Goines, however, found Holloway through the writings of Iceberg Slim. He wrote his first book, *Whoreson*, while serving time for larceny at Jackson State Prison in Grass Lake, Michigan in 1969, after a fellow convict gave him a copy of *The Naked Soul of Iceberg Slim*. Goines churned out 16 books with great titles like *Daddy Cool*, *Eldorado Red*, *Black Gangster*, *Swamp Man*, and *Never Die Alone* for Holloway House in just five years, while supporting a lifelong heroin habit and many illegitimate children. Although his writing was sometimes undisciplined, it was directly from the heart of the ghetto in all its anger and brutality. With a writing style that was clipped, nasty and veering towards the pornographic in its description of an always-fetid world, his books, bereft of modernist niceties, crossed a line that the Beat writers of the '50s were never able to traverse. *Dopefiend*, his second and

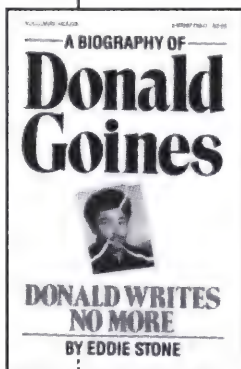


arguably his best novel, would make both Jim Thompson and Louis-Ferdinand Céline proud. The opening paragraph:

The voices inside the flat were loud as the argument continued. Porky, black and horribly fat, stared around his domain with small, red, reptilian eyes. His apartment was his castle. His world consisted of the narrow confines of the four walls that surrounded him. In his huge armchair he would sit watching the drug addicts come and go. They entertained him, not intentionally, but nevertheless they did. When they came to his shooting gallery and begged for credit, it gave him the feeling of power. With the women addicts he enjoyed himself even more. When they were short of money, his fiendish mind came up with newer and more abnormal acts for them to entertain him with.

Donald Goines's own personal illicit habits finally caught up with him on October 21, 1974, in Detroit, Michigan, when he was shot five times in the head by two unidentified white men while sitting at his typewriter. His girlfriend, Shirley Sailor, was also murdered. Two of their children were left unharmed in the apartment. The reason for his death was possibly drugs or robbery; the case is still unsolved.

With the success of Donald Goines and Iceberg Slim, Holloway firmly embraced hard "black experience" literature



OTHER BOOKS YOU'LL ENJOY

while still keeping a foot in the "erotica" door. Sometimes they combined the two fields, with a title like *Some Like It Dark* by Kipp Washington, "the intimate autobiography of a Negro call girl," that was first published in the '60s and is still in print. The late '60s and early '70s brought to light some interesting Holloway items: *Man: The Sensual Male*, by Dr. Sigmund Lichter (chapters included "Your Penis and What To Do With It," "Science and the 'Mercy Screw,'" and "When Sex Is A Party"); *Black Fury*, by Joseph Nazel ("He was a Black cog in Whitey's grinding, dehumanizing machine—until he exploded like a tortured animal!"); and *A Place in Hell*, by H. R. Kaye, an autobiography by a Hell's Angel biker ("He pushed dope, raped women, terrorized 'squares' and lived in a jungle of crime, violence and sadistic warfare!").

Venturing into the field of theory and academics, Holloway published two books by Robert H. deCoy—*The Nigger Bible*, which detailed race separation as the "nigger solution," and *The*

Cold Black Preach, which took on the black preaching establishment ("the black preacher is still whitey's flunky, a 'head nigger' hired to keep peace between the white exploiters and their black victims"). Both books were required reading material for the Black Panthers. Holloway also published *The Life: The Lore and Folk Poetry of the Black Hustler*, a social history and collection of "toasts," incredible spoken poetry passed down from one generation of blacks to the next. "The Ball of the Freaks," recited for the book by Bob from Sing Sing Prison, is especially nasty:

They had fancy trimmings and ball-twisting women

And homos that died for dicks, Cocksuckers by the dozens, motherfuckers and their cousins, Porkchop-and peppermint-flavored pricks.

There was old Fart-Smelling Rosie, acting kind of nosy, Sniffing real hard for some gas; Towel-Slinging Kelly, whose ass looked like jelly

From being popped so much in the past.

When someone farted, Rosie shouted, "Leave it alone, it's mine!"

And off she went, to pick up the scent With her nose up some freak's behind.

Two of Holloway House's best efforts in the early '70s, though, were "oral histories" collected by William Rotsler: *Girls Who Do Stag Movies: Intimate Interviews With Female Sex Stars*, and *Superstud: The Hard Life of Male Stag Film Stars*. Replete with photographs that have to be seen to be believed (that is, if you really want to see a guy that looks like Bernie from *Room 222* going down on a large-breasted naked woman wearing a sombrero),

OTHER BOOKS YOU'LL ENJOY

these books are a must for the bookshelves of swinger-libertines and Dworkin feminists alike. Warm in the glow of pre-AIDS, indiscriminate '70s sex, the male and female thespians of the stag film obviously enjoyed recounting for Rotsler the nature of their craft with all its resident hilarity and depravity.

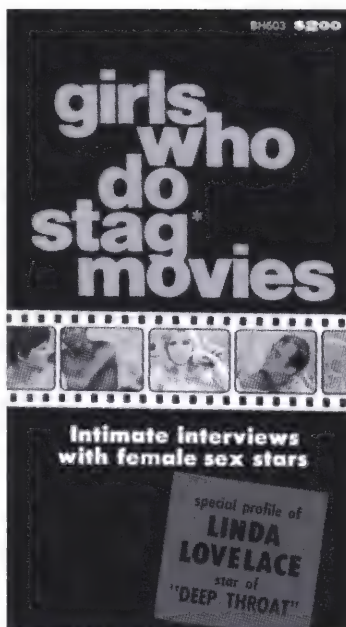
As we now enter the end of the millennium, Holloway House has impressively diversified their

offerings in profitable ways while keeping most of their mainstay black literature in print. They have exported Donald Goines and Iceberg Slim overseas with great success, and now also sell millions of cheesy how-to-win sports books (*Handicapping to Win*, *The World's Greatest Winning Systems*, *Backgammon*, *Gin Rummy*, etc.), black romance novels (*Silk & The Lady*, *Love's Velvet Song*, etc.), young adult biographies of famous black people (Dorothy Dandridge, Harry Belafonte, Jesse Jackson, Richard Pryor, etc.), and even an occasional horror novel (*Devil Dolls*, *The Rootworker*).

They could sell used dentures for all I care, as long as the works of Iceberg Slim and Donald Goines, and books like *The Life* and *The Nigger Bible*, remain in print and available for the hopeless, disenfranchised slacker-youth of today and tomorrow.

As the saying goes...great with your favorite beverage or straight out of the bag.

**Holloway House is located at
8060 Melrose Avenue
Los Angeles, CA
90046-7082**



BRIAN KING

is the owner and editor of Bloat Books, a publishing company based in Burbank, California. He recently published;

☐ **Lustmord: The Writings and Artifacts of Murderers**, a compilation of essays, short stories, memoirs, confessions, letters, manifestoes, poetry, drawings, photographs and other works created by serial killers, mass murderers, cannibals, necrophiles, sexual sadists, psychopaths and assassins.

**Bloat, P. O. Box 254 Burbank
CA 91503 bloat@cinenet.net**

to eliminate fatigue on foot. The only bad thing that can be said about Monza is that Jon Bon Jovi wore them on the *Slippery When Wet* tour.

FOREST HILLS TENNIS SHOES

The highest quality, lightest tennis shoe available in the late '70s. Gold-sole-and- stripes with white Kangaroo skin uppers and mesh insole and tongue, they included a special wrench which opened and closed a three-vent adjustable sole ventilation system located under the toes. Forest Hills had a suggested retail price \$70 a pair—the most expensive tennis shoes of the era.

OSLO JACKET

In order to be figuratively *down* in the late '70s, you literally had to have a down jacket or vest. The Oslo was Adidas' first success in winter outer wear. It resembled an A-15 top, only as fiber filled jacket with elastic waist and cuffs, and large collar that zipped up to wrap around the neck. This gem was never available in the US.

MARATHON '80 RUNNING SHOES

The lightest top competition running shoe, Marathon '80s weighed in at 6.5 ounces and came with a \$68 price tag. This is a refined version of the very popular TRX training shoe, to be worn only in races. As with the Forest Hills in tennis, the Marathon '80 was the cream of the crop.

FRANZ BECKENBAUER SOCCER SHORTS

The standard Adidas soccer-style shorts of the '70s, released in the US in heavy cotton and thick satin. The preferred version is the non-US, 100% polyamid nylon short, which is so comfortable it's like wearing nothing at all.

SUPERCUP SOCCER SHIRT

Another item never released in America, but extremely cool nonetheless. The Supercup boasted a design so great it would work today, although the only guys to have them were those lucky enough to be on early-'80s NASL teams like the Detroit Express, LA Aztecs, Tulsa Drillers, and Houston Hurricanes.

GAZELLE TRAINING SHOES

Of all the shoes Adidas brought back, Gazelles are unique in that they may be *more* popular in their re-release than they were in their early to mid-'70s heyday. A low profile shoe design with suede uppers in brilliant colors, although yesterday's bold red and blue color schemes have given way to powder puff pink and baby blue.

SHOULDER BAG

This was the predecessor to the backpack as a way to tote your bullshit to and from school back in the '70s. Upon its

debut, the shoulder bag sparked the popularity of sport luggage and gear bags, and like several other Adidas products from that era, it is also experiencing a comeback.

WHERE TO SCORE THE BEST OF ADIDAS

The Japanese as a whole seem to be a culture obsessed with shoes, God bless 'em, and not coincidentally the best place to buy Adidas products on this planet is at the Adidas Style store in Tokyo, Japan. Adidas allows its licensee [Desente] for the country of Japan to remake their past product as long as they don't export them to other countries. Adidas Japan remakes every amazing pair of shoes I grew up with. But they don't stop there—insane amounts of the original luggage is remade, as well as various classic clothing. There is also a full range of newly styled items, of which over half is not found outside of Japan. Upon our first arrival, both Field brothers found the store to hold magic powers and considered our journey there not unlike reaching the Mecca. Three separate credit cards were maxed out. For those serious about their shoes, this place cannot be recommended highly enough.

The best place in the United States to get the goods is a store in San Francisco called Harputs. The first half of the building contains an ample stock of what Adidas (and the other companies) are supplying now. The second half is the home of boxes and boxes of used old shoes. Hanging from floor to ceiling along the walls, Feti Harput is allowing Adidas clothing to age, like fine wine, until its demand like all Adidas products reaches a peak. Unfortunately much of the gold has already left this mine, although it seems they get new old stuff frequently.

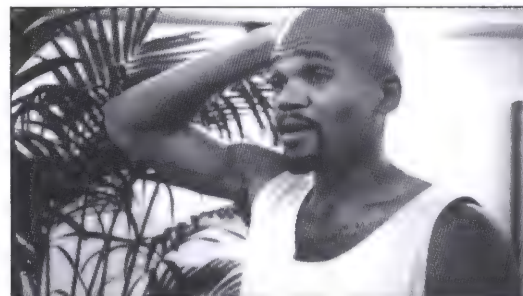
HARPUTS: 1527 Fillmore Street, San Francisco, CA 94115 (415) 923-9300

JD Sports in London has Gazelles and Campuses in special color runs, not to mention the ultra-rare Montreal '76 and Trim-Trabs. However, JD Sports rarely ever have the shoes in the standard range of sizes in stock, and they don't order shoes for people, so you must wait until they're in stock and get lucky. They have two locations at Oxford Circus, the addresses of which we do not have.

And finally, perhaps the most symbolic location to get very good Adidas gear is the factory Adidas store in Herzogenaurach, West Germany. The store is really packed with people, and the draw is a lot of good deals all sorts of limited production stuff you've never seen before, such as Adidas bathrobes, dress shirts, and boxing shorts. The factory Adidas Store accepts Visa and cash.



THEIR



We couldn't call this article complete without speaking to RUN-DMC. Unfortunately, one-third of the band (that would be the Reverend RUN) was preoccupied with production duties during their recent stay in LA. However, DMC and Jam Master Jay were both up for sharing words on the subject of the A to the D to the I to the D to the A to the S.

How did it get started between Run-DMC and Adidas?

DMC: Growing up in Hollis Queens, New York, everybody was wearing Pumas, everybody was wearing Nikes, and when we put our Adidas on we said we was never gonna take 'em off. And as things went on, down the line, you know, where DMC was always representing with the Shelltoes, we made a record about it. Everybody was loving the record, and boom bang, and then Adidas, the company began to hear about it.

JMJ: Through our management, we met this guy named Tony, he was from Adidas. And he just came to the Garden. DMC: Run said "If you got Adidas on, hold 'em up in the air." And 30,000 people in Madison Square Garden held 'em up. They looked at that and said "Ya'll got a deal."

JMJ: He left there and gave us a promise, "If you don't get a deal, man, I'mma quit this company for good." You know what I'm saying?





ADIDAS



Why didn't Adidas wanna work with you before that?

JMJ: I guess they didn't know what it was. All they knew was that they were selling sneakers. And what it was, everywhere we were going, you couldn't buy Adidas in that town—no parts. No hats, no shirts, nothing. Anything that said Adidas that year was out of the stores. We'd do in stores in malls and sporting stores, and everybody was buying Adidas.

You would do that stuff through Adidas?

JMJ: Naa, Adidas didn't have nothing to do with it. It would be the sporting goods guy's calling our management, "Yo, I need you to come down, man. We gonna hook up with the record store man and they come through with a record man and I can sell a piece of Adidas." It was just hot.

So you were selling a lot of Adidas stuff before you were involved with them.

JMJ: Yeah. We weren't even looking at it like that. We didn't make the song to be down with 'em, so we didn't care. We made the song 'cause I think Reebok was getting hot. And we wasn't feeling that at all. A couple of kids is running up on us, like "Why y'all don't get some Reebok?" The same question was asked to all of us. Run and them, we gonna (begins scribbling lyrics) and they just came up with it. Me and Run put the beat down, and him and D did what they had to do.

And how long after the song came out that the shoes came out. It was like a year, wasn't it?

JMJ: To tell the truth, I never really felt those shoes....we didn't design those shoes. We had hot designs. Designs that DMC made back then, they put out years later.

Did you guys ever go to any of the factories?

JMJ: We went to the original factory, where they made the first ones.

In Germany?

JMJ: Yeah. Where they still got like, 20 people that's just *doin'* it. There's still OLD ladies doing them like this (makes hand stitching motion). Where you can still get your original

joints.

DMC: We seen all this Olympic history stuff. Saw a size 15 Adidas for Bob Lanier. Seen all types of Olympic and Bill Cosby stuff. Everything.

That must've been cool.

DMC: It was really cool.

Did they ever give you custom stuff, like totally weird stuff just for you guys?

JMJ: We got, like the HOT leather joints, before they made the leather joints [A-15 tracksuits]. We got the real fly leather ones, with the leather collar, before they began to manufacture those. Butter soft, hype joints. Those gold sneakers that they got us was hot. I still got mine, a Shelltoe. It's hot.

DMC: Yeah, definitely. I got a whole lot. Crazy, crazy stuff. Leather coats that nobody else could get. I got these hiking boots that nobody else got.

What do you think of all the Old School stuff coming back, again?

DMC: I think it's dope because right now, it seems like all the sneaker companies are trying to outdo each other with all these wild designs, and high tech, futuristic stuff, and you look at the older styles and remember how comfortable they were, and how dope they looked.

JMJ: I always kept a closet full of Shells. And every time you bust a pair out, everybody'd be like "oohhh". But some towns, like Boston, they never went nowhere.

Right.

JMJ: (smiling) I guess you all can't really do this without going to Boston. (laughs) Are you going to Boston?

No, but I hear that's true...

JMJ: Boston is the only city in America where they was three stripes...put it this way, like if you walk down the block with a pair of Nike's or something, down the wrong block on the wrong night, with some drunk people...you'd get stomped OUT. You can come with any kinda flavored three stripes through those ghettos out there. You come with some other kind of sneakers, for real, they'll pick on you. When we went out there with Timberland's on, they

were like "Wassup wit da three stripes!? YO!" (laughter). Something about Roxbury, Boston. I don't know. They felt what we felt, but it's forever. They just vibing like that. We came back, Adidas really started coming back a couple of years ago. I mean, *really* gettin' cool. 'Cause it got frustrating to us, because we were 100% down, more down. We ain't gettin' paid, we just want you to be HOT, stay hot. They didn't let us fight for 'em.

How did you guys get paid by Adidas? Was it per shoe?

JMJ: Yeah, we just got hit off. I don't even remember if it was a per shoe thing. I know we just got a few check, over a million dollars. It was a million dollar deal.

That's good.

DMC: They gave us a lot of tour support. A LOT of tour support. And we're really thankful for that. They helped us out with a lot of charity stuff. And they sent us CRAZY stuff, like one tour we got so much stuff we was just giving stuff away to Whodini and LL...the cook, and workers, and policeman. I mean, we was handing out so much Adidas stuff.

JMJ: They looked out for us. I mean, I'm still looked out for. My kids are looked out for, my wife is looked out for.

What are some of your favorite products?

JMJ: I think the Shelltoes, you can't get around 'em. To me, that's like a pair of shoes, on a day when you can get geared up and look just like NEAT. A clean pair of Shelltoes will always do it for you. Hi-tops. The lo-top joints were the original ones, but I grew into the hi-tops. They just hit the jeans better. I don't know on the gear side.

DMC: Yeah, I'm not sure of the number, I think it was the A-15 model...

Yeah, the warm ups.

JMJ: Anything they got with zippers on the pants. You gotta have a zipper on your pants.

Your keys fall out?

JMJ: Your cheese, man. Your keys is one thing, but your cheese is another.

Interview by Dan Field, photos by Spike.



EASY RYDER



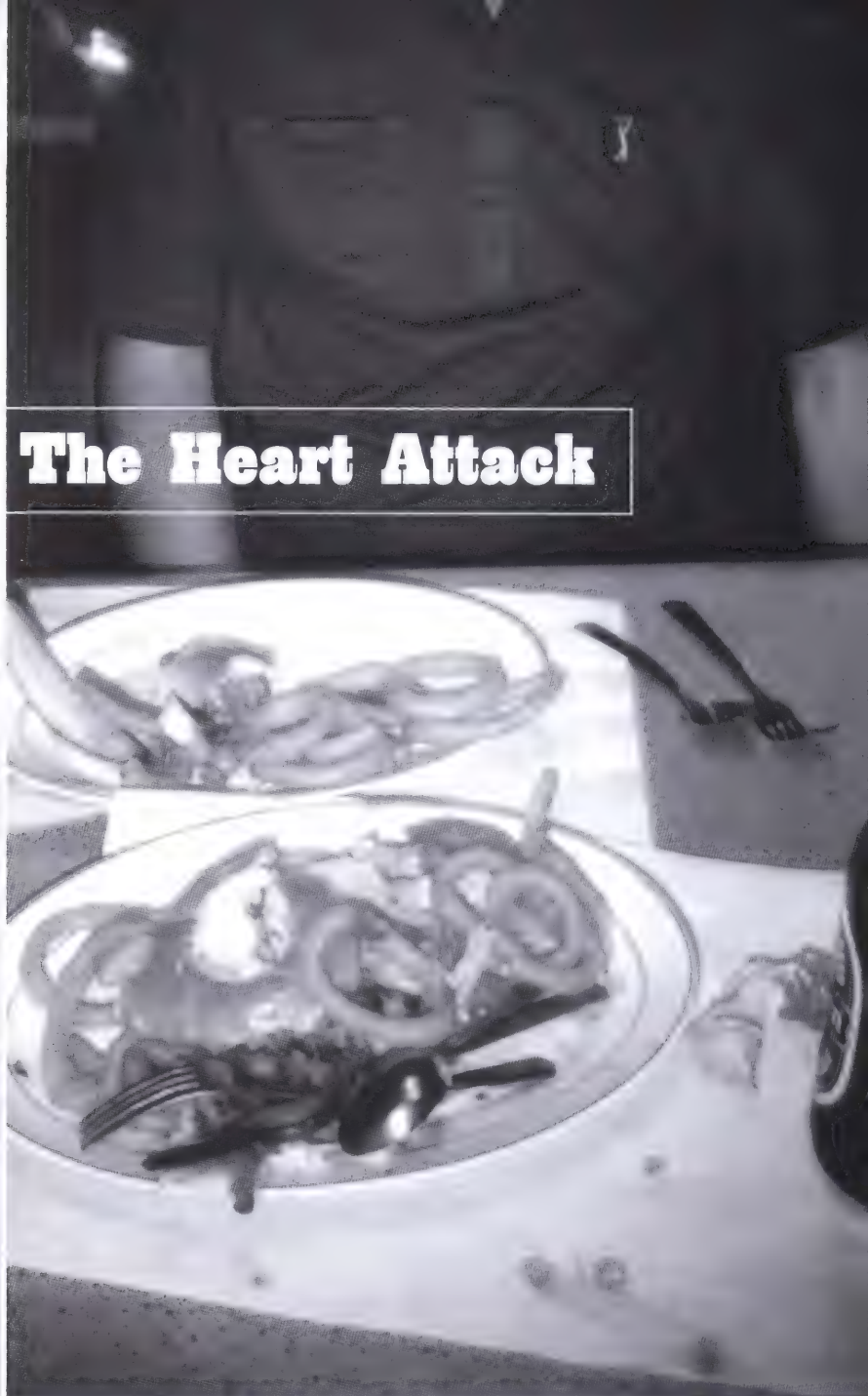
BUM RUSHING THE WORLD'S MOST

So as I was saying...

I was definitely on the Mickey D's you deserve a break today tip so I went to my friend's friend Ara's ranch in Los Banos, which does not mean "The Bathrooms" but "The Baths." My time on the farm was all I hoped it would be: Simple, spiritual labor under a hundred degree sun. No mind games, rock stars, back stabbing or bad mindedness—in a word (excuse me, two): no bullshit. See, by the time the magazine rolled off the presses, not only were a bunch of copies missing a bunch of pages but Mike and I were no longer speaking to each other. We would try to be nice. He'd say something with a slight undercurrent of whatever it is that Mike does that tends to irritate people, not just me (I believe the phrase is "slightly supercilious" but that's not it exactly). And of course bullheaded stubborn as a mule always eager for an argument me couldn't resist responding with what Tom Wolfe once put as, my "resentment tucked into my waistband like a .45"



Bob Mack and The Heart Attack



PRESTIGIOUS GOLF TOURNAMENT

So I was glad to get away and work amongst the Mexicans, two of whom were brothers that were dead ringers for Adam Yauch but none of whom knew me or my self-fulfilling reputation. The two Yauch brothers were also multi-instrumentalists who played with a Turquoise uniformed troupe called Joe Jardin and The Show Jardin. I worried that they'd smash their long delicate musician's fingers as we loaded huge, heavy, sharp as fuck aluminum irrigation pipe on to the truck beds for 10 hours a day, five days in a row. For their part they couldn't understand why I'd want to work with them but as long as I didn't dog it and at least went through the emotions of communicating in "Spanish", I'd be OK. They shared with me the spectacular lunches their wives had packed. They took me out in the early morning and let me shoot their sawed off shotgun. Nothing like grinning campesinos giggling at a gringo. They even invited me to their harvest fiesta where there was going to be cerveza, tripe and cockfighting. Unfortunately I never got to go because halfway through my stoop labor vacation I got a phone call from my childhood buddy Sean Callahan, better known to Beastie Boys fans as "Heart Attack Man."

Apparently Sean had received a message via car (speaker) phone, Russ Rush style,

from a noticeably giddy Mike D and Adam Yauch. Such phone calls are always a bad sign I'd learned as the dictum "Don't Call Us, We'll Call You" took on heightened meaning. The upshot was they had a "Top Secret" assignment for Sean and I, which I greeted with not a little anger because here they were scratching at my doggy door less than a week after I'd cut loose from their barnacle-encrusted docks. Dirty pool it was, too, to go through my best friend and butter him up like the turkey he is.

The plan was to send us to the Ryder Cup, arguably the most prestigious golf tournament in the world. This was a particularly diabolical offer because my dad is still a five handicap at age 68, having played the game almost daily, without ever using a cart, since he was 12 years old. For those who don't want to do the math, that's 56 years. Now in addition to all this my Dad had always distrusted not so much the Beastie Boys (he's never met any of them) but more just the fact that his ne'er-do-well son had gone to work for the Beastie Boys. I'd always been a flake who'd failed to grow up but this was ridiculous. Just the name—Beastie Boys—suggested, hell, celebrated a state of terminally arrested adolescence. That I had helped the band put together a surprisingly well-received



first issue of their magazine (let alone survived the attempt to produce a twice as big and twice as crazy second issue) only made him more suspicious. Are these guys paying you enough? How many copies are they gonna sell and will you get any of the royalties if they ever break even?

And suddenly here they were again. They debriefed Sean on our assignment with despicable speakerphone nonchalance. The plan was simple: Mike had won a trip for two, all expenses paid, to the Ryder Cup, and although he and Tamara couldn't or didn't want to make it, the thrill of thrift was too great to resist so he got the bright idea of fobbing off the tickets on the only two chowderheads who could appreciate such a bourgeois spectacle—and the only two guys who could also pull off the assignment, which simply put was to get as fucked up and cause as much trouble as possible. Oh yeah, and I was supposed to go as Mike D. That is, impersonate Mike. Be like Mike. Not for a day but an entire weekend.

Mike had won the trip as a door prize at the first and probably last golf tournament he'll ever enter—one in which he'd played with a heartless abacus operator from the band's feared and loathed accounting firm, Gelfand, Rennert and Feldman. In turn, Gelfand is part of the nationally known firm Cooper's and Lybrand, who were corporate sponsors of the Ryder Cup. As a result Coopers had invited all the biggest shots from all their biggest clients to the August Oakhill Country Club in Rochester.

A difficult offer to refuse. For one thing, I love to goof off, especially with my idiotic friend Sean. Since age 10 (we're thirtysomething now) I'd played Tennessee Tuxedo to his Chumley. We'd gotten in so much trouble together by the time we were 15 that our parents banished us from seeing each other—a ban lifted only recently when Sean's dad grudgingly allowed me to work as a day laborer loading 1,000 pound freezers into convenience stores for his commercial refrigeration firm. For another thing, it wasn't just Mike but Yauch who was making the offer. Mike's no dummy, in fact he's a genius, and if he can't play the drums as well as Neil Peart he can play people as well as Bill Clinton or apropos e.g. anyone. And he knew that while I might at least try for a little while to ignore his attempts to kiss and make up, he knew I'd never dream of not responding to a message from Yauch. Because Yauch and I have a special relationship. He got me into this mess in the first place. Ever since I wrote the story for *Spin* back when *Check Your Head* came out, a story which "tried to get slick" in his words and make a little fun of the three kids who were better than anyone at making fun of people—let's say we've been friendly rivals ever since. The fact that we're both Leos supposedly didn't help. The fact that I admire Adam's discipline and ambition make it impossible for me to front on him, despite our many differences both esthetically and politically.

So there was Sean grinning, going come on dude we gotta do it. And there I was knowing that if I said yes my dad would disown me. After I'd left LA and before I'd gone to the cantaloupe farm I'd stayed at my folks' house for a few weeks and every day he'd ask me what I was gonna do with my life while simultaneously demanding my word that I would in no way associate with the band ever again. Obviously you're not happy working for those bastards. When I had my business, he'd say, fuckers like that push you around, you know what I'd say? Take a flying fuck at a rolling donut, that's what! But you know what that old son of a bitch said when I said, look pa, the Boys just made me an offer I can't refuse. They want me and Sean to go to the Ryder Cup. It was as if all his past bad feelings had been zapped by Kryptonite. Ryder Cup? Well shit, ya gotta go. All three days? With hotel and corporate tent? Hell, if you don't go, I'll go.

Upon reflection I should have took him up on it. Instead I took the offer, which was now also a challenge and opportunity to finally write something, for the first time in 17 years of publishing that my dad would actually read and enjoy. It was also the ultimate opportunity to settle my score with Mike.

As of this writing neither goal had been accomplished. But it could be a lot worse. Here's where the real story begins. I apologize for the preambling but hopefully it will help you appreciate the next few day's events.

Finally we hit the road. Prior to taking off we'd done a good portion of the booger sugar we'd bought and we're hoping to save. Being gakked up in any situation is a drag but it's especially lame when you're cooped up in a car for an hour let alone a plane for six hours. In addition to the toot we had our normal six pack and several bong hit buzz going on, so in most peoples' eyes we were probably a mess. But for us it was still, like I say, just another Wednesday night.

When we got to the airport we immediately made the first of many mistakes: we took our bags to the Skycap and as a consequence we lost Sean's ticket. For some reason both our tickets were in my envelope and as I was fumbling with them at the skycap podium the cap offered to check us in to our flight so we said sure. We didn't have time to dick around so we rushed up to our gate, whereupon a surly female looked into Sean's envelope and informed us there was no ticket. Rather than sympathizing checking the computer, confirming the reservation, verifying Sean's ID and at the most slapping us with a nominal penalty for losing the ticket she handed the envelope back with a self-satisfied smirk and said there was nothing she could do for us. I knew that wasn't true. I can't exactly remember what happened next but it probably involved telling this terrible woman to fuck herself. And as much as Sean likes to play devil's advocate and bust my balls he



agrees that she was being awful—though we were pretty hammered and the “F word” was flying out of my mouth with alarming regularity.

At any rate, it was past midnight, passengers were boarding and after she refused to even call down to the Skycap (where, of course, the ticket was), I screamed one last epithet at her and stalked a few steps away, where Sean and I huddled and decided to audibilize: I would fly out without him and he would follow the next morning after straightening everything out.

The next day Sean went to the American terminal and was issued another ticket and left on a 1:00pm flight which got him into Rochester after a layover in Chi at around midnight, 11 hours later. When he got to the hotel, Sean asked for his friend Bob Mack. They said there was no one under that name, and he remembered that I was supposed to be Mike D. When they asked why he was calling me Bob, he said that Mike does a lot of writing under that name and often uses it as an alias. They looked at him kind of queer but figured oh that’s right, all rock stars use fake names when staying hotels.

He found me semi-conscious on the bed, beer bottles strewn around the room. What little coke was left we quickly consumed and started playing Lee Perry really loud until security called and said turn down the TV. Sean lit up a smoke, which set off a fire alarm, so we decided to hit the bars. There we were approached by two cute girls—a blonde and an Amerasian girl who worked for Cooper’s—who were quite eager to get to know Mike D better.

The blonde girl said she had a friend who REALLY loved the band that I just had to meet, so I turned my attention to the Amerasian girl, who was engaged but drunk enough to forget such technicalities. Being the Beavis and Buttheads we are, however, we blew it. It was hard for me to lie a lot, plus the disillusionment of suddenly being attractive to women just because they thought I was someone else prevented me from putting the moves on. And believe me, this girl was ready willing and able. She even emphasized that she had skeleton keys to the liquor cabinet and basically the run of the place. I’m just staying right down the hall from you. If you need anything, just whistle. You know how to whistle don’t you, Mike? Just put two fingers in your mouth and blow. She even opened her room door and showed us a glimpse of the room, which was more deluxe than ours. But Sean and I went back to our own room with our six pack that the bartender had packed for us after 2:00am against all odds and rules.

We powered through the six pack in a matter of moments, which only made us more thirsty. At 3:00am we went back out into the hall looking for wine, at which point I decided to tentatively knock on Diane the Amerasian girl’s door. Had she been up she would have heard it. I was mildly disappointed but actually greatly relieved. We didn’t find any wine

(during the daytime they’d had a complimentary cafeteria table full of sodas and alcohol set up in the hallway). We did find a few final beers floating in the melted ice and went back and drank those in our sleep, no doubt chasing them with other spirits in our dreams. We were supposed to be up at 6:00am like real people and real journalists, but we woke up at 9:00am instead, just to keep those squares on their toes. Then we took a shuttle to Oak Hill, a distinguished establishment which we immediately re-dubbed “Bushwood” in honor of the Country Club from *Caddyshack*. It was raining and we didn’t have umbrellas, so we went to the corporate tent and proceeded to augment the previous evening’s still lingering drunk with a fresh new improved one. I was inundated with knowing “you’re Mike D” sideglances from everyone—although it made me nervous it nothing short of delighted Sean. The bartender was a real Irish old-school know-it-all busy-bee that I’d gotten to know the day before while watching the opening ceremonies on the bar TV ceremonies, I might add, which were highlighted by Rochester native Chuck Mangione’s flugelhorn playing. Tired of beers, and excited by the possibility of free drinks, Sean started calling out for his personal favorite, VO and water.

Now while I hate Sean in general, he’s completely inexcusable whilst in the clutches of a stiff VO and water. He began two fisting it for all he was worth, which admittedly isn’t much but was enough to oil up his gout-stiffened joints. We decided to take our act out on to the course, even though it was still raining. Our hosts supplied us with complimentary umbrellas and we headed out, a day late and a dollar short, to cover our assignment.

Being a spectator is difficult enough, but trying to cover a golf match without knowledge of or interest in the sport is impossible. We were slipping all over the place, watching a tee shot here, peeping another foursome’s putting over there. We heard cheering from another part of the course and deciding to go in that direction, only to discover the gallery had moved on. It was a joke. To make matters worse there were, in addition to the insufferable American country club yuppies, hordes of blasted Europeans, mostly wild-eyed Brits.

For some reason I was noticed by a distinguished looking British aristocrat who looked as hammered (and unconcerned about that fact) as we did. He probably noticed me because I was staring at his wife, who was one of those elegant 40-something beauties that you might see in *Town and Country* magazine. They didn’t have umbrellas, so I offered ours, and he said “What a nice young man! You Americans aren’t all little shits, then, are you?” What a nice young man, my ass, I thought miserably of the real Bob Mack behind the fake Mike D. But I went along with his request to “walk with me for a while.” He was older but in good shape, kept a spry pace and held my arm to keep from slipping while Sean escorted his wife. They were the nicest people we would meet. When we took



our leave we let them keep one of our umbrellas.

By this point we were in the middle of the course, away from the dry tent and wet bar, which is why our most primordial survival instincts kicked in and we both automatically started looking at the ignition of every golf cart we walked by. And there were carts everywhere. The rain stopped suddenly and the sun shined down momentarily on one cart. Both of us knew what that meant, and sure enough there it was in the ignition: a key. Remember, one key fits all as far as golf carts go. But more importantly, Sean and I have a fetish for stealing golf carts. When we were 11 years old on the fourth of July we livened up the festivities at our hometown country club by stealing and thrashing a number of carts just for shits and grins. Like everything else we used to do, we got away with it, so why would it be any different this time around? In one motion I snatched the key and kept walking real cool like until we came across an abandoned cart. We jumped in, turned the key and vroom! we were off. We then discovered the cart had been dumped because it was out of juice. So we drove it into the bushes, cursed and kicked it for good measure, took out our key and began looking for a new one, which we found soon enough and drove back to the tent, as unconcerned as newlyweds on a honeymoon.

At the tent we received a hero's welcome. Paddy O'Wagon the bartender bellowed that he'd seen us on the video monitors. We headed for the club house figuring we should watch a few foursomes wrap on the 18th, but we were more interested in the 19th hole.

I can't exactly remember how, where, or when we met Bill, Dan and "The Pro." But we did. Bill was a Big Wheel, a pre-insider trading scandal Wall Street type cut from the '80s mold who had a separate golf club in his bag for each every country club he belonged to, which at this point clocked in at 12. He billed four million a month, he said, so we referred to him as "4 Mil Bill." Definitely a stud, but not so big a prick as to not pay proper deference to his buddy, a tabacky chewing preppy-turned-yuppie they called "The Pro," meaning he was a scratch golfer who gigged at either a private club or public course. The Pro genuinely wanted not so much to see the action, but to get out there and challenge the players, so we knew he was for real. Plus, he wore golf shoes with spikes, producing the requisite official clickety-clack sound when walking down the cart path.

I was beginning to feel terribly guilty. On top of the pressure of impersonating Mike D, there was the personal professional issue of not being prepared for or able to execute my assignment. Everywhere I looked I saw photographers with all-access credentials working their asses off in the rain. They were lifers, I was a drifter. I had access to the corporate tents, I was impersonating a rock star, it wasn't costing me anything and yet Sean and I were still stranded for all intents and purposes with the general admission rabble. Without a press pass I couldn't get close to the action on the course and without the super duper Bushwood credentials I couldn't even catch a glimpse of the actual clubhouse, where every cigar store crony from broadcaster Dick Enberg to golf Nazi emeritus Byron Nelson was sitting on their piles, farting dust and white-washing the whole affair for a worldwide

viewing audience. So something had to be done. We bumped into these guys who could tell we were A) Drunk; B) Unconcerned about being drunk; and C) In possession of a golf cart which we obviously had less right to be driving than Mark David Chapman did to a fair trial.

Within moments we were warm friends. Greasing the wheels and paving the way was a man named Dan whose last name (Leary) piqued my curiosity regarding the possibility of his being related to the late Timothy Leary (also of upstate New York), and whose connections 4 Mil Bill and The Pro were obviously counting on. See, Dan's brother was a member of the club—I think he even said president or former president—just to keep the ball rolling and the hopes high. Off we went towards the much-vaunted, even more venerated but hardly ventilated clubhouse, i.e. a greasy spoon coffee shop, beer and booze besmirched bar and overpriced polo shirt outlet. Of course by this point I was so drunk I couldn't hear and as such was incapable of and disinterested in keeping an eye on Sean, who not coincidentally was just beginning to regain the confidence he used to have when we were kids.

A brief aside about Sean. People who only know Sean through me tend to assume that I keep him around as a combination sidekick and sounding board for my so called jokes, most of which in turn he dutifully laughs at but which he actually knows are no funnier than the fact that most people assume he doesn't understand. But the truth is that I keep Sean around to keep me in check. Let me explain. When we were kids Sean was not the walking wheezing poster boy for the American Cancer Society and Heart Association he's been portrayed as in the song "Heart Attack Man." He was the greatest athlete I or anyone else had ever seen. I remember watching him run 93 yards for a touchdown with no time left on the clock as if he were running through a field of lillies with a butterfly net. Older, stupider, hairier kids form a dirtier suburb sprawled in vain as his Adidas Superlights and WigWam tube socks hurried by their pink prepubescent hands. At any rate, we had been big dealing it and bullying our way into sporting events, parties, restricted areas, other people's homes and much more since we were four feet tall members of a championship Pop Warner football team. True, we hadn't tested our skills for close to a quarter century but having sex ain't the only thing that'll all come back to you like riding a bicycle. The fact that we had already stolen several golf carts that morning should've raised a stadium full of warning flags. While 4 Mil Bill, the Pro and Dan may have sensed danger, damned if they were going to pass up an opportunity to let someone else take the fall while they got their own jollies. So Dan stuck his neck out, pulled strings, bent ears and did everything but kiss ass to get us in to the inner sanctum of the clubhouse. Meanwhile I'd struck up a conversation with a British photographer and asked if he'd ever heard of *Loaded*, the chivalrously chauvinist UK publication I already owed (and still owe) a story to and which I assumed had sent a correspondent to cover this same event. Indeed the so called correspondent they'd sent was my editor Tim and yes, the photographer could vouch that they



were definitely here had been yukking it up in all the right circles the whole time. In other words, I couldn't compete. I was an amateur, a failure and a drug addict, but not a homosexual (so there went my chance a la Capote to be a genius). I was lame.

Like the black burglar at the beginning of *Dirty Harry* doesn't know how many shots are left in Harry Callahan's gun ("Well, what's it gonna be, punk?"), so too I had to know whether Sean Callahan and I could finagle a final hurrah. My advice: don't ever doubt yourself. Because we made it into the clubhouse. Not only that, but Dan sweettalked our way into a big round table which many other much more qualified fascists were bidding for. I had both my sunglasses and a buzz on. The hubbub grew so loud I could hear a pin drop. I began staring at an unbearably wholesome auburn haired beauty across from me, wondering where I'd seen her before. Murmurs of "that's Mike D from the Beastie Boys" emanated from purple lips of people I didn't know, trust or see. Waitresses who seemed to know what I wanted to drink (which was anything short of the dregs of a highball glass with the contents of an ashtray dumped into it a la Spalding Smales in *Caddyshack*) circled about. The whole room—and for all it's shortcomings this place did have 20 foot ceilings—started to spin like a helicopter blade with Vic Morrow's name on it. It was hell or high water.

I believe it was high water we encountered first. The clubhouse was cool, but like any cool thing it became really hot real fast. Nobody was looking at me, which to my suds-soaked skull was proof enough that everyone was talking or thinking about me. Including the aforementioned fresh-faced floozy whom I now pegged as Christian pop-rockster Amy Grant, who from my days writing puff-piece intros to the MTV's Top 20 Video Countdown I knew was a happily married faithful de facto virgin. Her husband was nowhere in sight but the Pro, Bill and Dan were most definitely in the house. Sean didn't count. And neither could I, even up to 10. Let's get the fuck out of here, I suggested. My foil and our followers were all too willing to get their elbows off the table and asses in gear.

It must be said that our friends were easy to stomach. Sure they were fascinated in the most tawdry possible way that I was supposed to be Mike D of the Beastie Boys. And naturally I had to sit through the obligatory adulation and thanks for having changed their lives back when the inflatable penis and go-go girls had come through town on the first tour. Aside from that, though, they gave us space, especially as it became clear that this Mike D guy was a throwback to the days of real rock stars who hurled TVs out of hotel windows and let Ahmet Ertegun pick up the tab. Sooner or later my cover would be blown. He was along just for the ride. Well I'll fix that I figured. Fuck Sean, Fuck Mike and yo, fuck you!

Zig-zagging out the front door, thumbing our collective nose, farting, laughing, scratching, belching, yelling, pretty much everything but living and coping. People parted like the Red Sea before us as if we were Moses and a few Jews. Sean knew where we were heading, which is why he allowed me to continue on uninhibited. At this point I had actually ceased giving a shit. Like Willy Wonka having finally made it into the chocolate factory,

we were there. Cables, tripods, and cameras were all around. No one seemed to be paying attention. This is where all the heavies waved their hand to the humble masses and then hid for the rest of the weekend. The PGA and NBC, not to mention M-O-B and C-O-P-S all had their headquarters here. A beefy yellow windbreaker wind breaker, visibly frothing with the future promise of legionnaires' disease, stood guard.

Personally I had no preconceived plan. I jumped in the first cart I saw. I'll never forget the hummingbird's pause, the literal nano-second which allowed me to glimpse the mixture of terror and indecision etched on everyone's face. Especially Sean, that little Catholic piece of crap, who by now knew he was in too deep. The Pro, 4 Mil Bill and Dan went against their better judgment and jumped in, only because they could. This was no ordinary golf cart, but a special four-seater reserved for NBC's Bob Trumpy, parked right outside the main entrance in the glorious semi-circular driveway where mortals weren't even allowed to walk. Sean hollered "shotgun!" and the three amigos wedged their way into the "back seat," i.e. two extra seats facing backwards like a Subaru Brat.

Next thing I knew the wet grass was under our wheels. If you want my opinion, what happened was not my fault. Put it this way: if you go that club today and ask people if they've ever heard of the Beastie Boys, they'll probably say something like "Yeah, ain't that the guy who almost killed 100 hundred people at the Ryder Cup?". We rolled down a hill towards the real world: responsible journalists, innocent gallery bystanders, golfers in their foursomes, official personnel in ill-fitting attire. 4 Mil Bill yelled "he's gonna kill somebody." We were losing traction fast. We began fishtailing and the last thing I saw was Corey Pavin's mustache. We slid backwards down the hill, through the yellow boat rope that demarcated good from bad and into the path of the oncoming professional golfers, whose minds, lives, wives and children hung in the balance. I missed crashing into them by inches and spun out in a humiliating stall at the bottom of the hill.

By then everyone had bailed. I was alone. But for once in my life I did the right thing. Usually I'm the well meaning Leo left holding the bag that I just let the cat out of, but this time, emboldened by the knowledge that I was impersonating Mike, I swiftly stepped out of the cart with aristocratic nonchalance as if it had been the little electric brute's fault. I swiveled my head back and forth like Stevie Wonder and skedaddled towards the corporate tents. Suddenly my tricep was in the grip of a militant field hockey phenom who was a little too full of herself in her brand new amber windbreaker. "Here he is!" she hooted triumphantly. To my credit, I said nothing, which is remarkable under any circumstances but which should be attributed to the fact that I was hammered like the anvil at the end of Dragnet. The assistant Authority Figure signaled for help and help responded. First it was the country club cops, itching to press charges stemming from stolen golf carts. Then the big brass arrived in a grey and purple uniform with a ten-gallon trooper's hat: New York State Police. He asked if I had ID. I said no while inadvertently patting my back left pocket to make sure my wallet was still there. He asked if I was sure and I said yes, I'm sure. OK



then, what's your name, he asked, and for a moment my heart fluttered like a flatulating tire. I was about to respond Robert M. Mack, social security number blahblahblah, just like my lilly-livered ass had done the previous 1,000 times I'd been busted. And yet for some blessed reason I responded with the words "Michael Louis Diamond." Where do you live?, he asked. I gave him Mike's home address, figuring this was gonna be easy. What's your social security number?, he countered. "Oh Christ," I spat with as much rock star attitude as I could muster, "How the hell would I know!" And at that point I knew we were free because I had lied—and liked it.

Dan, meanwhile, was trying to get me out of this mess and getting sucker punched in the stomach for his efforts. Thankfully another yellow jacket stepped in to assuage the overzealous (in)security guard and Dan got a word in with the trooper, who allowed us to leave the premises if we promised to not come back again that day. Dan warned everyone that an international scandal would surely ensue if Mike D of the Beastie Boys was busted for fucking-off in a golf cart. The big yellow jacket, who we later learned was Buffalo Bills quarterback Jim Kelly's bodyguard, helped Dan straighten everything out, pausing only to inform me that if I ever needed a fixer in the Empire State he was the right man for the job. I think that's when I finally came to and had to control myself from laughing out loud at the thought of the real Mike D being stuck in and freed from such a spider's web of bourgeois rule-breaking.

Dan walked us to the bus, made sure we were safe walked back to the tournament shaking his head with its shit-eating grin, confident he had tall tales to tell his loved ones for generations to come. Back at our room I crashed out, while still-rambunctious Sean headed down to the bar, only to return a half-hour later with three new friends. I awoke in a violent motion to see Sean grinning and introducing Tiger, Dino and John. Yawning, rubbing my eyes, cursing, grabbing my crotch and savoring the taste of trash on my tongue, I heard one of them say, "Hey Mikey! Beazstie Boys! Let's party!" I gave Sean the same "you sonofabitch" look I've been giving him since the days of Pee Wee football but there was nothing I could do. They buffaloed me back downstairs to the bar, where we learned that Tiger was a compulsive gambler, Dino a bookie and their buddy John a postman who for some reason had given himself a tattoo of the Dallas Cowboys logo on his right shoulder blade. We decided to give our new friends Mike D's corporate passes so they could go and enjoy the rest of the day and so Coopers and Lybrands' generosity wouldn't go to waste. We had what seemed like a half a drink and the next thing we knew they were back, babbling about how great a time they'd had until the people in the tent had noticed they didn't belong. At first I feared retribution, like "Yo Mikey you set us up!" but like all

goombahs who'll never see the backstage performance unless they are watching the making of the Aerosmith album home video, they were as star-struck as a chunk of earth that just got hit by a meteor. At this point it was decided that we would commission Tiger to go score a dime bag of dirt weed from Rochester's rasta neighborhood

An associate of theirs strolled in to check the TV monitor that was displaying the most recent winning keno numbers. Keno had just come to Rochester and was all the rage. "What are the lucky numbers today?" Tiger asked in all seriousness. "Watch the 7s and 11s," the handicapper advised solemnly. That's when I knew we would be all right. For all the doubt of my manhood, talent and whatever else, I knew for a fact that I would never ever have to go out like that. And neither would Mike. It was a class thing, which is harsh but true. Sean and I adjourned to our room and showered before ordering Steak Diane rubbed in garlic from room service. After chewing on said gristle we napped for an hour or so, at which point we woke up, went back to the bar, listened to the lounge's rock combo and played pool with the black maid and a few of her rather large male friends. We recognized the black maid because earlier she had made funny gestures to us, like holding her thumb and index finger up her lips.

The next morning, Saturday, I felt worse than I've ever felt before or since, and Sean was really hung over. Nevertheless we shat, showered, decided against shaving and tried to toke away our hangover. Today we not only had to scramble to scrape together a modicum of real golf information for the story but I had to run the risk of impersonating Mike D in the wake of "his" Hendrix-like rock excess the day before. We expected that all eyes would turn on us when we entered the corporate tent but little did we know that the fellow travelers and true believers would only be hungering for an encore. Sean was now calling me Mikey with extra emphasis and contempt because he knew it was making my terror of being exposed was making me sick to my stomach, not to mention mortified at the prospect of mealy mouthing my way through the assurances that "Yes I'd be happy to send your nephew Newton an autographed picture of the band." I started off with a few Bloody Marys while Sean dove back into VO and water, but I was none too keen on hanging around the tent. Not only would I have to answer all sorts of questions about the previous day's mischief, but the whole idea of living a lie was beginning to weigh on me. Rather than cast doubt on my identity, the golf cart incident only confirmed that I must be a rock star.

Still, any moment I figured our cover would be blown and we'd be riding in the back of the trooper's car after all. So I stayed out on the course, lying in the grass, moaning, finally finding a tent adjacent to the 18th fairway under which we watched a good portion of



the groups with some local kids, one of whom was a groundskeeper at the club. The kid was goofing on Johnny Miller, the former pro turned NBC analyst. And while Miller is a schnook, I was reminded of my ongoing beef with another NBC announcer Bob Trumpy when the former football stiff zoomed by in a cart, smoking a cigarette, ostentatiously ignoring our raspberries disguised as autograph requests. We ran after Trumpy toward the green but stopped when we saw a group of abnormally good-looking golf groupies. Along with every other male in the vicinity we walked behind them for a couple hundred feet, pretending not to ogle their various anatomical highlights. Eventually we wandered back to the tent, where my nerves were calmed somewhat by a lengthy discussion with a security guard who had played for the Kansas City Chiefs. We wowed him with our command of '70s sports trivia, not unlike Ricky Powell would have done, and that gave us enough confidence to hop on the bus and go back to the motel. Back down at the bar we hooked up with Dino and Tiger, as this was their actual regular hangout. Dino had once had a room there for his bookie operation but at present he wasn't far enough ahead to afford it. Within in no time it had become a full-on Saturday-night's-all-right-for-partying vibe. Again they were implicitly challenging us, in particular me the Beastie Boy, to drink as much as possible. Sean sensed that they doubted our limits, so he called their bluff and asked them to go score us some blow. About an hour later Dino returned with a damp notebook paper bundle containing what amounted to a line for each of us—i.e. just enough to make us feel on top of the world until we got back down to the bar, where it occurred to us that the black maid was again in effect, this time without her boyfriends and smirking knowingly. We hung with her a bit, which illed Dino and Tiger out a bit, so they took off and we just rolled with it, suggesting that the maid too go in search of some more you know what. And again money changed hands, many minutes passed and eventually she returned with an equally disappointing count of perhaps even worse white powder which could've easily passed for the chalk used to demarcate yardlines on a football field. That lasted all of two minutes, and from there on out we had a thoroughly enjoyable evening listening to Lee Perry very loudly, yelling over the music and periodically peeking out the window in a state of paranoia peculiar to those who ingest amphetamines. The maid said she had a sister we might want to meet, so we accepted an invitation to her room. Upon entering, however, we almost shouted in fear at her tubby and toothless sibling who looked more like her grandmother than anything else. It was time to call it a night—actually it had been for quite some time—so we returned to our room, smoked the remaining dirt weed out of our by now blackened can pipe and collapsed.


Upon awakening Sunday morning Sean was "feeling like crap." For some reason I wasn't in that bad a shape, if only because the guilt of having not done a damn bit of reporting overwhelmed my hangover. After taking the bus over and breakfasting in tent, we hit the course and tried to tail favored pro golfer Curtis Strange, as all pressure had been put on his shoulders. We followed Strange's wife, who was busy wringing her hands as her husband tried to stave off Britain's Nick Faldo (who used to be called "Foldo" because of his propensity to choke but has since lived down that rap and become one of the best clutch players in the game). Strange led the whole way but victory just wasn't in the cards. After all, he wasn't even supposed to be on the team, but he and US team captain Lanny Wadkins had been college buddies, and Wadkins had final say over who got picked. And though at one time Strange was a star, lately he'd fallen off and was a curious pick by anyone's standards. To put him head to head against Faldo on the final day was virtually suicide, but that's precisely why Wadkins attempted the super-duper reverse psyche out—and it almost worked. But in the end, Strange couldn't hold on to his one stroke lead. Faldo waited for him to miss just one putt for par—and Strange capitulated by missing on both 17 and 18. I couldn't help looking at his wife in her absurd red, white and blue macramé sweater which all the wives were required to wear. But what was so sad, and why we ultimately walked away feeling self-righteously disgusted with an event that in the end didn't deserve to be covered by anything more than a couple of morons, were the impolite groans and moans from the gallery when Strange finally muffed it. While we don't know much about golf, we'd like to think that we grasp the nature of competition and sportsmanship, and compared to the fair-weather fans comprising the rest of the crowd we were models of appropriate athletic conduct. The nerve of some people—they yelled at him and ridiculed his missed putt, conveniently missing the point that at least he was still in position to win it at the end and hadn't been completely blown out as predicted.

As for ourselves, it was a continuation and culmination of the previous few days. As time ran out, everybody and their brother came out of the woodwork waving business cards and requesting autographs. In desperation I declined to sign any. Here I was being just like Mike but worse: bullshitting and backpedaling, saying that I'd like to wait and have all three guys in the band sign something special for little Susie or whatever. I did sign one, though, for Jim Kelly's fixer who had saved our ass. "Hey Mikey, you really should have yourself a fixer when you come to a big event like this," he advised. "You know, that's a good point," I hemmed. "We'll have to get back to



you on that," Sean hawed. I signed in my own handwriting, making no attempt to replicate the preposterous faux-graffiti tag signature Mike usually uses. There were other well-wishers, particularly the chairman of Coopers and Lybrand, whom we kept putting off until the final moment when we cut out, citing an early flight as our excuse.

Back at the hotel Diane was with her boyfriend, and her blonde friend Jill was both proud and embarrassed to announce that her boyfriend had proposed to her on the night that she had hoped to give him the shiv and hang out with us. So perhaps things would come out in the wash after all. The plane ride home should have been the final nail in our coffin, seeing as it took 10 hours, but somehow we survived. We finally got back to LAX and realized I'd left my suit that I hadn't worn (and Sean had specifically brought along at my request) back on the plane. By the time I returned to the gate, though, it was closed, as was the lost and found I'd been directed to by the burly surly big black mama who seemed to be taking great pleasure in letting little whitey know there wasn't a damn thing she could do about it. Sean loves it when I get riled up, but this was more than he bargained for since he wasn't exactly in a chipper mood himself. I kept bitching the entire ride home and he finally started giving me the West Point treatment so I could stew in my own juices without bringing him any farther down than he already was. Which was pretty far down. I mean, let's face it: what did we have to show for ourselves? Receipts for our expense? Don't be absurd! Photographs? Of ourselves in various incriminating poses, perhaps, but yo, we weren't even allowed on the course so what do you expect? We didn't want to cause any trouble, right? As for the future, it looked bleak because I was no longer Mike D, rock star—I was just Bob Mack.

Then again there were some bright moments. Everybody had loved us. We had completed the primary assignment of disrupting the proceedings to a significant extent without being caught or exposed. Plus I'd gone the entire weekend without having to use the porta-potty outhouses scattered across the grounds. What had I done instead? you might ask. Well, let's just answer that question with another question: How does a bear shit in the woods? I'm not sure, but when I was squatting down at the base of a pine tree trying not to attract attention, I heard a rustling of leaves and snapping of twigs which could've easily passed for urine locomotion. Of course it was only this black dude who grinned and nodded at me as he tromped by. You know what they say: great minds think alike. 



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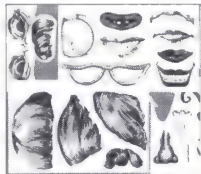
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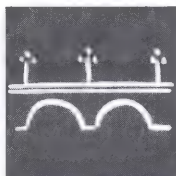


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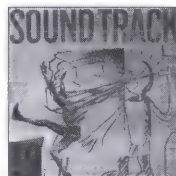
"JUKE"
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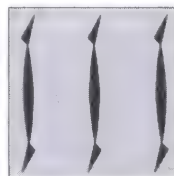
"NINETY SEVEN CIRCLES"
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"PIECES"
1981 [BOMB CD-42]



"SOUND TRACK"
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4-Track e.p.
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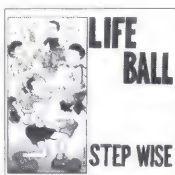
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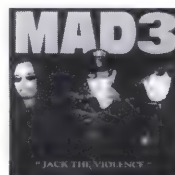
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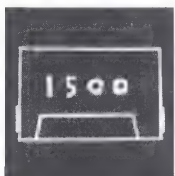


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Superb and beautiful weird Jap. lyric folk-pop songwriter "Toyoda"s solo debut and second album. Japanese Lou Barlow?

upcoming fuckhead

time bomb label new release information

- **SUPERSNAZZ** "Devil Youth Blues" [BOMB-35]
9-Track new album CD / LP
- **MAKE UP - T.B.A** [BOMB-38]
Treasure of Wash.D.C.(!) new recording 4-Track 7" e.p.
- **MAD 3 - Single Compilation Album** CD / LP
- **5.6.7.8's - 10th Anniversary Compilation** CD / LP
- **SEIICHI YAMAMOTO** (Boredoms/Omoide Hatoba)
- Solo Album CD / LP
- **V.A. - Playmates, Tweezers, Sleeve etc.**
Jap. Mod/Power Pop band compilation album CD/LP
- **YOSHIMI - Single Compilation Album** CD / LP

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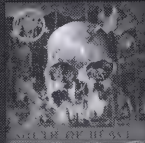
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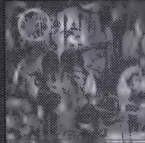
Decade Of Aggression



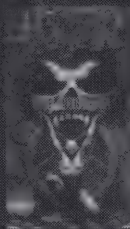
Seasons In The Abyss



South Of Heaven



Reign In Blood



Live Intrusion
(Video)

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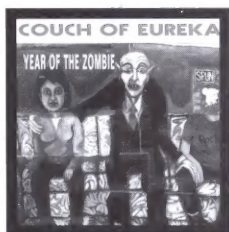
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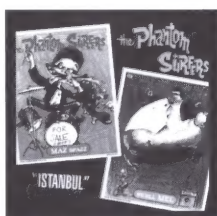
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